LEE SIEGEL: THE SECRET OF SOVIET PAINTING

AUGUST 31, 1998 • $3.50

THE NEW REPUBLIC

Can Clinton Cope?

SCANDAL AT HOME: *Dana Milbank*
TRB • Jean Bethke Elshtain

TERRORISM ABROAD: *The Editors*
Peter Bergen and Frank Smyth
Jacob Heilbrunn • Steven L. Pomerantz

#BXBKDML***5-DIGIT 94301
#TNR0000068171/5#01 29OCT01

009

RON K UNZ
555 BRYANT ST #371 RC
PALO ALTO CA 94301-1704

PLUS:

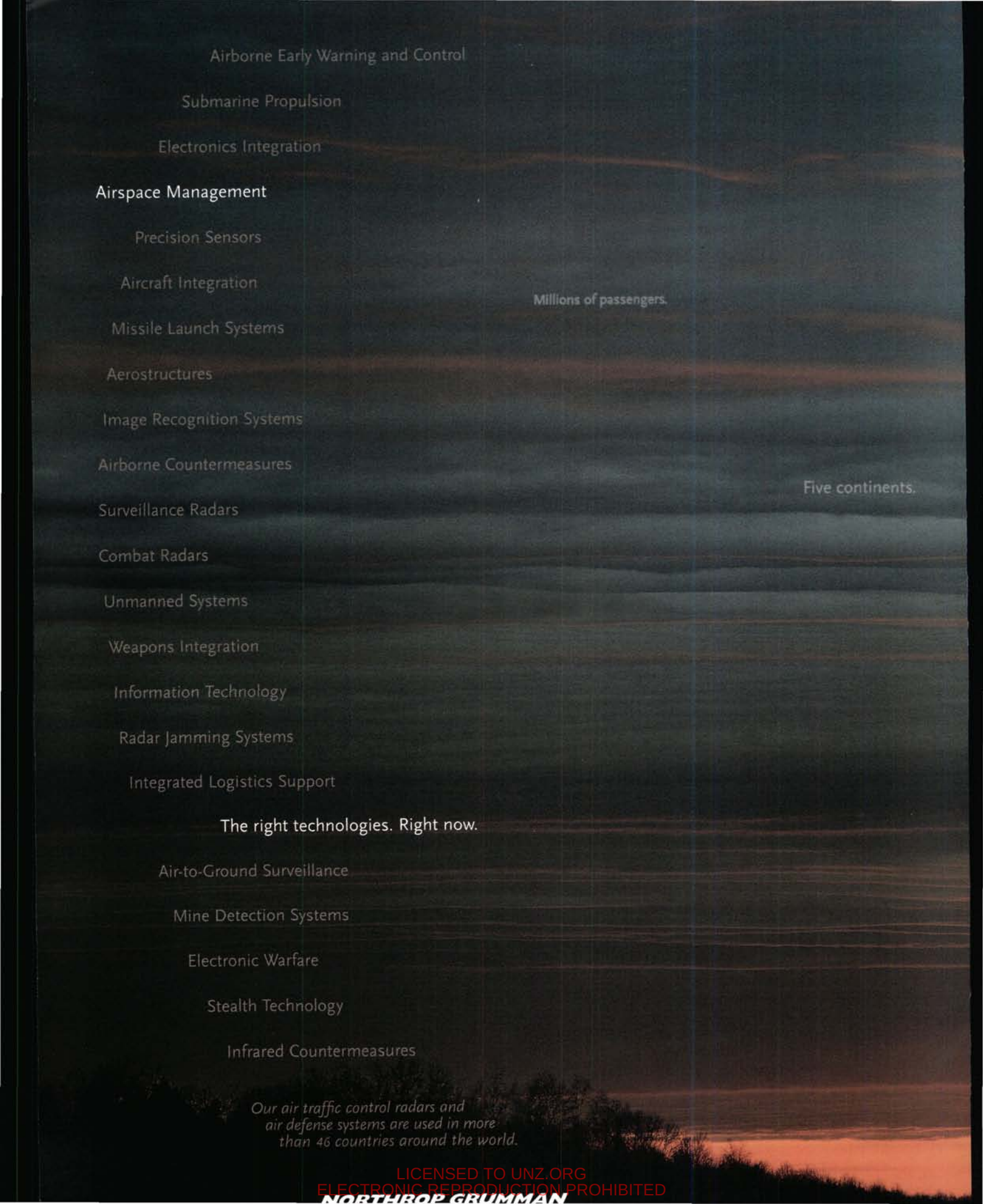
THE REAL SPIRIT OF 1968

A New Argument on the Meaning of America's Most Turbulent Decade

By John B. Judis

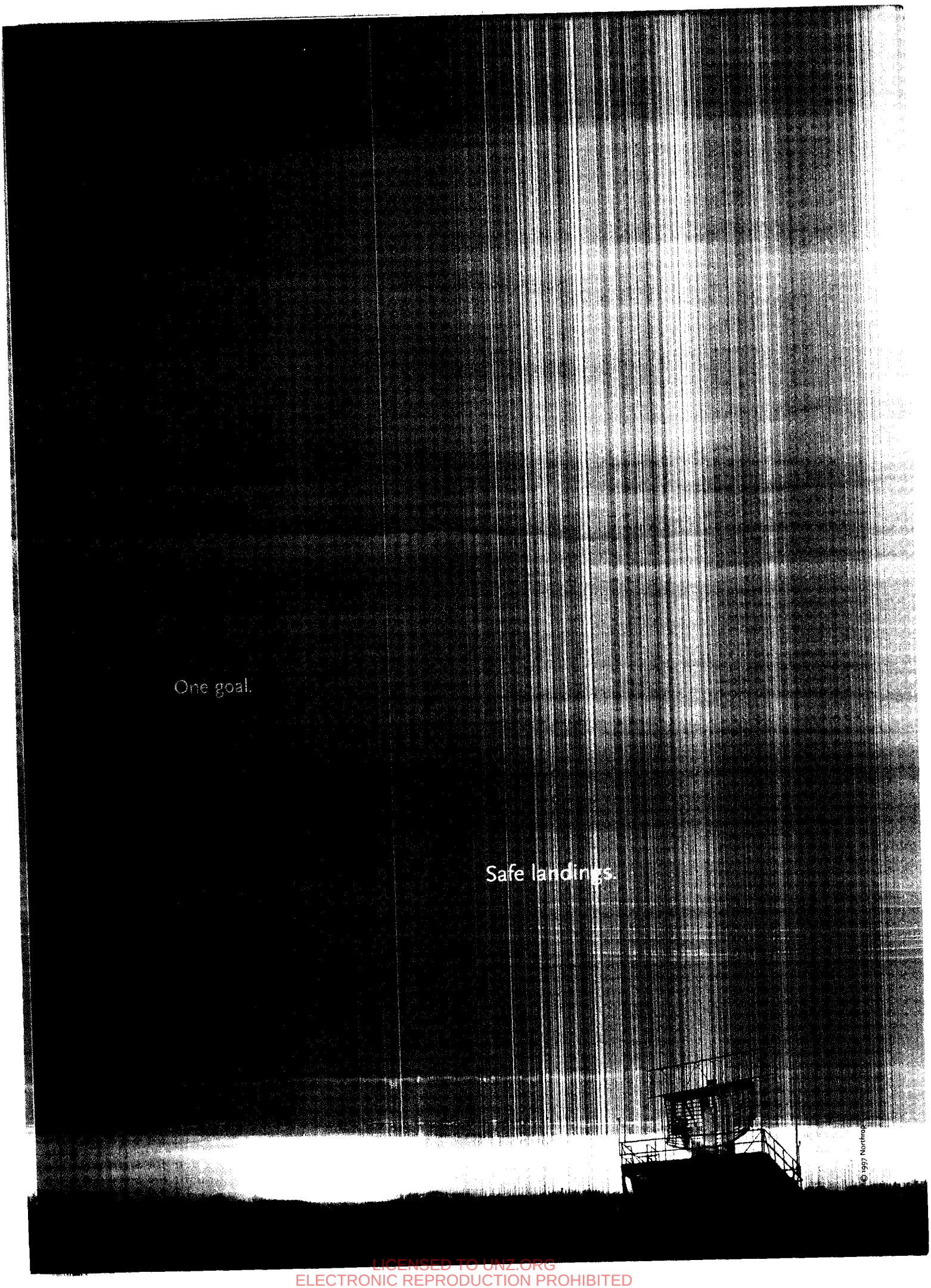
$3.50US $3.50CAN
35>
01742
0 787446 8

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NORTHROP GRUMMAN



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

Holding court

To the editors:

Your editorial opposing an independent International Criminal Court reflects an unfortunate misunderstanding of how the court would operate ("Courting Disaster," July 13). You criticize the court for "equating" democratic states that have functioning judicial systems with tyrannical states that ignore the rule of law. It will do no such thing. Reflecting the standard proposed by the U.S. government, the court will step in only if national courts have been "unwilling" or "unable" genuinely to prosecute a war crimes suspect. Given the strength of the U.S. judicial system, the court would rarely—if ever—second-guess an American prosecution. By contrast, Iraqi or Burmese judicial action—the two cases you cite—would receive little deference.

Next, you argue that crimes such as genocide should be met by military force, not after-the-fact justice. True enough. But governments far too frequently lack the political will to stop genocide. In such cases, the second-best threat of justice is a far better deterrent than the alternative—impunity. Justice is hardly a foolproof deterrent, but, even if the ICC worked to forestall genocide only occasionally, isn't it worth it?

Granted, to make the threat of justice credible, military force may still be needed to arrest suspects. But, as we've seen in the Bosnian and Rwandan genocides, governments are much more willing to arrest suspects when the killing ends, and the risks of international intervention are reduced, than to stop their crimes while the slaughter is underway. Justice thus remains a viable tool even when cowardice and indifference stand in the way of using military force to halt genocide.

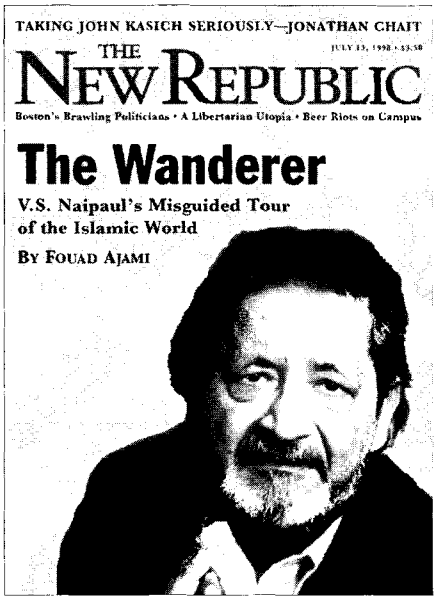
Finally, you argue that the ICC and its perceived threat to American soldiers will give the Pentagon and White House "a new and powerful reason to do nothing" in the face of mass slaughter. But it's hard to imagine, in this CNN-driven world, that the U.S. government will be able to say, "Oh, that genocide—we'll let the ICC take care of it." And, given how extraordinarily unlikely it is that the international court would ever second-guess a U.S. inquiry into war crimes allegations, that perceived threat to Americans should hardly be decisive. Rather than indulge yet another excuse for inaction, let's at least build an effective international criminal court that can serve as a backup deterrent to these monstrous crimes.

KENNETH ROTH
Executive Director
Human Rights Watch
New York, New York

NATO's mission

To the editors:

Ronald Steel's assertion that NATO is spoiling for a fight in Kosovo is absurd ("Hijacked," July 13). The Pentagon has repeatedly made known its unwillingness to get involved, and the Clinton administration's weakness has allowed the military to create foreign policy by default.


TAKING JOHN KASICH SERIOUSLY—JONATHAN CHAIT
THE
NEW REPUBLIC
Boston's Brawling Politicians • A Libertarian Utopia • Beer Riots on Campus
The Wanderer
V.S. Naipaul's Misguided Tour of the Islamic World
BY FOUAD AJAMI

Europe is also reluctant. If anything, NATO is looking to avoid involvement in Kosovo at all costs.

Steel also argues that NATO's intervention would be against American interests. But the costs of not intervening will accrue rapidly as the war in Kosovo escalates; protracted war there will be inherently uncontainable. Western intervention is the only way to prevent the conflict from spilling beyond Kosovo's borders. If that happens, Macedonia might soon cease to exist, sparking a war among all the surrounding countries. That's a risk too great to allow.

KURT BASSUENER
The Balkan Action Council
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

Because there was never a military showdown in Europe between the West and the Soviet Union, Ronald Steel believes that NATO is a useless relic of the cold war. But, if it chooses to accept it, NATO already has a vital mission on the threshold of the twenty-first century. It is to help solve or prevent crises that threaten European peace and security. That mission can never be accomplished by following Steel's prescription for moral disengagement. His side of the foreign policy debate regarding Yugoslavia and the Balkans has already been embodied in the craven realpolitik carried out in Bosnia by the U.N.'s blue-helmeted bureaucrats, who saw cease-fires where there was war and safe havens where there were killing fields. If stopping aggression and genocide in a fragmented post-cold-war Europe is not a worthy mission for NATO, then what is?

BERT D. YAEGER
New York, New York

Party hardly

To the editors:

It was with much shock and surprise that I read Ryan Lizza's "Party Politics" in the July 13 edition of THE NEW REPUBLIC. His article is filled with half-truths, distorted facts, and outright lies.

To begin with, the items mentioned in Lizza's article—the shortening of welcome week and the banning of common-source alcohol containers—are but two examples of a number of decisions made by Michigan State University officials that occurred without student input—very few of them involving alcohol. Other examples include the university's decision to demolish a student greenhouse and the elimination of printed scheduling course books. Munn Field was simply the latest decision.

Furthermore, I was not trying to promote "an act of rebellion" in the name of alcohol. My role was to remind the administration that the student body has a voice that must be considered.

Finally, Lizza failed to accurately depict what happened during the Munn Field incident. The Michigan State University police, quoted in the student newspaper as stating "we're not going to allow a large gathering to take place," were out in full force the night of the event. When I arrived at the field that evening, I found the gates locked, "No Trespassing" signs posted around the field, a number of police officers milling about the interior, and several cruisers in the immediate vicinity.

Eventually, hundreds of angry students rushed the field. But this was no "drunken mob": students slid in the mud, played Frisbee, sang the school fight song, and threw footballs. Later, the crowd marched peacefully away toward the president's house and continued without incident for approximately two hours through the streets of East

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lansing until they reached the main intersection of town. Unfortunately, as the protest moved through town, word spread to the bar and party crowds. What happened next, as has been said, was deplorable. Those students who participated in the riotous behavior—a minority of the protesters—were not fighting for any cause, and they should be punished for their behavior.

To those of you who still want to believe that I and other MSU students cannot "think of anything more wholesome than fighting for the right to party," I hope this helps to set the record straight.

ADAM HERRINGA
Lansing, Michigan

Ryan Lizza replies:
I don't doubt that MSU students were irritated by the loss of their greenhouse and schedule books. But, in an interview with me, Adam Herringa mentioned only alcohol-related decisions; students did not riot until alcohol was banned. According to MSU Police Captain Klei Becker, not only was the crowd drinking, but, in a prelude to the rest of the evening's violence, they were also throwing their beer bottles and cans at the police. Adam Herringa distinguishes between "protesters" and the "bar and party crowd." But his own pre-protest e-mail to the MSU community invited students to "one last party on Munn Field."

Roth's writings

To the editors:
Your Notebook item ("Roth Goes," July 20 & 27) criticizing the Zionist Organization of America for leading the opposition to the nomination of John Roth as director of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies argued that "digging in people's occasional writings for embarrassments is repugnant." We at the ZOA examined Roth's writings not for "embarrassments" but to determine if his stated positions were at variance with the goals of the U.S. government agency that was about to hire him. Holding a public figure accountable for his own words is not only appropriate but also a vital part of the democratic process.

Indeed, TNR itself has repeatedly raised questions about nominees on the basis of some of their writings: in 1987, you expressed concern about the nomination of Robert Bork for the Supreme Court based on articles he wrote in 1963 and 1971; in 1993, you opposed the nomination of Lani Guinier for a senior Justice Department post based on her "published support of equal racial outcomes"; and a 1994 cover story by Charles Lane about the nomination of Strobe Talbott for deputy secretary of state criticized Talbott on the basis of some of his articles for *Time* magazine.

John Roth's paper trail is just as relevant. For example, he compared Israel to Nazi Germany and the Palestinian Arabs to the Jews under Hitler (*Los Angeles Times*, November 12, 1988), compared the conditions leading to the rise of Ronald Reagan to those leading to the rise of Hitler (*Current*, Fall 1980), compared attitudes toward poor Americans to attitudes toward the Jews in Nazi Germany (*USA Today*, October 11, 1988), and authored an essay (*Current*, Winter 1983) in which he said both PLO terrorism and Israeli self-defense were acts of "evil for the sake of good," blamed Israel, in part, for Arabs' hatred of it, blamed Israel for Egypt's refusal to normalize relations, and implied that Israel's policies were based on Holocaust memories, not legitimate security concerns.

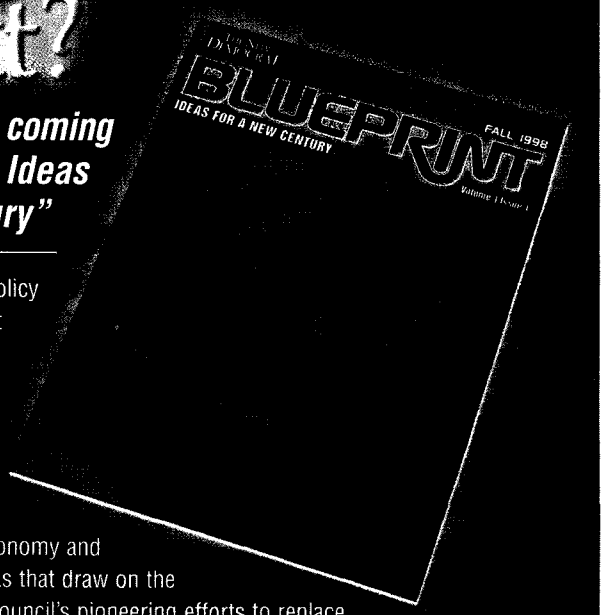
The controversy has now been resolved by Roth announcing his withdrawal from the position. As the child of Holocaust survivors, I am grateful that the manner in which it has been resolved will preserve the museum's good name. This decision will prevent the dissemination, with the museum's

continued on page 45

An end to welfare as we know it. A balanced federal budget. Free and fair trade. Community policing. The ideas championed by the Democratic Leadership Council have helped change the politics of our nation. Now, only one question remains—

What's Next?

The answers are coming in "BLUEPRINT: Ideas for a New Century"



This September, a new policy journal will begin to chart the way to the year 2000. **BLUEPRINT** will advance the big ideas that will carry American politics into the 21st Century. Ideas that address the challenges of the new economy and the Information Age. Ideas that draw on the Democratic Leadership Council's pioneering efforts to replace the orthodoxies of the left and the right with solutions fit for the future. Each issue will also feature an exclusive in-depth poll from President Clinton's pollster.

BLUEPRINT will publish in September 1998 and continue quarterly through the year 2000. Subscribers will also receive 6 ***FREE*** issues of the DLC's magazine, *The New Democrat*, a lively journal of policy and political analysis.

A subscription to **BLUEPRINT: *Ideas for a New Century*** is $20.00 (USD). To place an order for yourself or a colleague, call **(800) 546-0027** or mail/fax a request to:

Blueprint Circulation Department 518 C Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20002
Fax: (202) 544-5002 E-mail: blueprint@dlc.org

See **BLUEPRINT** on the Internet: **http://www.dlc.org/blueprint**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TRB®
FROM WASHINGTON

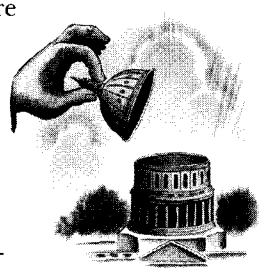
First fibber

At long last, Bimbroglio has reached its climax (so to speak). President Clinton is going to give his sworn testimony before Ken Starr's grand jury. And, to all appearances, the independent counsel has the president right where he wants him. Clinton faces two bad options. He can stick with the "no sexual relations" story he told last January—both in his sworn deposition in the Paula Jones suit and before the TV cameras—even though that story has now apparently been contradicted by Monica Lewinsky's sworn testimony and a lot of other evidence. Or he can change his story. If he does the former, he risks a charge of lying under oath before the grand jury. If he does the latter, writes *San Francisco Examiner* columnist and CNBC scandal-monger Christopher Matthews, then "admitting in August what he denied in January would expose Clinton to an open-and-shut case of perjury in the civil case."

Plainly, the president is in a tight spot. But I'm not so sure his predicament is necessarily terminal. Far from recasting the scandal as an easy binary question about whether or not the president committed a felony, Clinton's grand jury testimony could merely serve to underscore what the public already knows or believes about his morality, while making it impossible for the Republican Congress to continue avoiding the question of what, if anything, to do about it.

I assume, of course, that a sexual affair of some kind took place between the president and the intern and that Clinton and Lewinsky endeavored to hush it up, as adulterers do. But I also assume the truth of press reports that she says he never told her explicitly to lie under oath. I assume, too, that the "mea culpa" option, a version of which was recommended by this column (among countless others), has been discarded. And, finally, I assume the president is smart enough not to compound his problems by telling the grand jury anything but the tawdry truth.

Leveling with the grand jury would, as Matthews says, deviate from what the president said in his Paula Jones deposition. But this hardly presents Starr with an "open-and-shut case of perjury." Indeed, there may be no such thing, which is why sworn lies, whether in civil or criminal cases, are so rarely pursued by ordinary prosecutors. To win a perjury conviction, one has to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendant consciously lied about a material fact. A mere contradiction between two people's statements, without independent corroboration, is usually insufficient proof. Defendants can often plausibly plead confusion or a faulty memory. Nor are weasel words necessarily illegal; in the 1973 *Bronston* case, the Supreme Court held that evasive or vague testimony isn't perjury as long as it's technically true.



Now let's go to the Jones deposition transcript. In response to a few questions about whether or not he had ever been alone with Lewinsky, or given her gifts, the president rambled on inconclusively, but never actually denied anything. So far so good (see *Bronston*). He did emphatically say, "I have never had sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky." But remember that he did so after being given the following definition by Jones's lawyers:

> For the purposes of this deposition, a person engages in "sexual relations" when the person knowingly engages in or causes (1) contact with the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or buttocks of any person with an intent to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of any person; (2) contact between any part of the person's body or an object and the genitals or anus of another person; or (3) contact between the genitals or anus of the person and any part of another person's body. "Contact" means intentional touching, either directly or through clothing.

Depending on what the president and Lewinsky actually did together, the president's answer could reflect some confusion about whether their escapades did conform to the letter of this prolix definition (the Jones lawyers were apparently too squeamish to ask the president tough follow-up questions). The answer could also be true. To get an idea of how the president and Lewinsky could have done something that wasn't "sexual relations" as defined in the Jones deposition, but still left "genetic material" on her blue dress, consult page 24 of this week's edition of the supermarket tabloid *Star*. Suffice it to say I found the description of how the president and the intern purportedly managed to turn sex into a satisfying noncontact sport at least theoretically plausible. Yes, this is slicing the baloney pretty thin, but sometimes that's what the law is all about—especially in perjury cases.

In short, Clinton's day before the grand jury will be a demeaning ordeal, but, once it's over, he may finally glimpse the light at the end of the Bimbroglio tunnel. Sometime next month, reports *The Washington Post*, Starr will go to Congress with a voluminous report dedicated to the Clinton-Lewinsky relationship. The tome will be larded with all the details from the president's grand jury testimony that haven't already leaked, and will culminate in a charge of lying under oath in the Jones deposition, but won't contain a smoking gun proving that the president conspired to obstruct justice.

And so Bill Clinton will stand before the public, exposed as a man who cheats on his wife with a volunteer employee barely older than his own daughter. A man who does this in reckless disregard of the risks to his personal reputation and the legitimacy of his administration—not to mention the dignity of his office. A man who then tells a story about it under oath which, while not necessarily perjurious, wasn't exactly honest, either.

Advantage, Clinton. Why? If the last two presidential election results and current poll numbers suggest anything, it is that confirmation of the president's character flaws will be greeted with an exasperated yawn by the voting public, which has clung tenaciously to the view that Clinton's inveterate roguishness is not a reason to cast him out of office. The Republican Congress, which has so far been content to let Starr bleed Clinton and the Democrats, would suddenly have to take political responsibility for perpetuating the scandal—which the public wants to end. My guess is that, after duly airing Starr's report for the benefit of their party's right wing, GOP leaders will issue a finding that the president behaved dishonorably but not badly enough to warrant a protracted effort to remove him from office. Thus, Clinton would get to serve the last two years of his term—which might feel more like a sentence than a victory by that point, anyway.

CHARLES LANE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

AUGUST 31, 1998

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 4,363

Editor-in-Chief and Chairman
MARTIN PERETZ

Editor
CHARLES LANE
Literary Editor
LEON WIESELTIER
Executive Editor
JONATHAN COHN
Senior Editors
PETER BEINART, DAVID GRANN, JACOB HEILBRUNN, JOHN B. JUDIS, DANA MILBANK, ANDREW SULLIVAN, MARGARET TALBOT, JAMES WOOD
Legal Affairs
JEFFREY ROSEN
Managing Editor
NURITH C. AIZENMAN
Assistant Managing Editor
JOSEPH LANDAU
Films
STANLEY KAUFFMANN
Theater
ROBERT BRUSTEIN
Poetry
MARK STRAND
Dance
MINDY ALOFF
Art
JED PERL
New Republic Online (Electronic Newsstand)
BRIAN HECHT
New Republic Books (Basic Books)
TIM BARTLETT
Contributing Editors
FOUAD AJAMI, ELIOT A. COHEN, STANLEY CROUCH, JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN, NATHAN GLAZER, ANN HULBERT, MICKEY KAUS, MICHAEL KINSLEY, CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER, VINT LAWRENCE, MICHAEL LEWIS, GLENN C. LOURY, DOUGLAS G. McGRATH, LOUIS MENAND, DAVID RIEFF, ROGER ROSENBLATT, MICHAEL J. SANDEL, MAGGIE SCARF, LEE SIEGEL, RONALD STEEL, MICHAEL WALZER, JACOB WEISBERG, SEAN WILENTZ, ALAN WOLFE, C. VANN WOODWARD, ROBERT WRIGHT
Special Correspondent
ANNA HUSARSKA
Associate Editors
JONATHAN CHAIT, RUTH SHALIT
Editorial-Corporate Coordinator
LAURA E. OBOLENSKY
Production Director
BRUCE STEINKE
Production Manager
HENRY RIGGS
Assistant Editors
JENNIFER AHARI, RYAN LIZZA, JASON ZENGERLE
Literary Assistant
ADAM KIRSCH
Reporter-Researchers
DANIEL HOPKINS, STACEY ZOLT

Publisher
WILL LIPPINCOTT
Associate Publisher, New York
MARTI A. MEYERSON
Director of National Advertising
JOAN STAPLETON TOOLEY
Director of Finance and Operations
CHRISTINA R. BONIFER
Marketing Manager
SHABNAM K. SHARMA
Advertising Manager
ASHLEY H. COOPER
Circulation Manager
HEATHER HARMON
Advertising Coordinator
PATTY DUGGAN SHAMA
Advertising Associate
SHANNEL MYERS
Circulation Assistant
NI'MAT A. BILAL
Accounting Assistants
JACQUELYN M. McCULLOUGH
KIMBERLY HUSTAD
Back Issues and Reception
CHRISTA RICE

Cover by Jonathan Houston for THE NEW REPUBLIC.
Photo © Dennis Brack/Black Star Publishing/PNI.
Articles on pages 6, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, and 17.

4 **CORRESPONDENCE** NATO in Kosovo, politics on "The Simpsons," &c.

6 **CHARLES LANE** TRB: FIRST FIBBER Almost nobody seems to believe the president's story about Monica Lewinsky—and almost nobody seems to care.

9 **THE EDITORS** BLASTED The attacks in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam should prompt the United States to rethink its approach to terrorism. NOTEBOOK Tim Russert scorches himself, Ken Starr invokes privilege, &c.

11 **JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN** THE HARD QUESTIONS: GATSBY RETURNS Bill and Hillary, as F. Scott Fitzgerald might have seen them.

12 **DANA MILBANK** WHITE HOUSE WATCH: UNSEMENLY Clinton loyalists need not fear: When it comes to escaping traps, Clinton could teach Houdini a thing or two.

14 **STEVEN L. POMERANTZ** THE BEST DEFENSE How do you protect against future terrorist attacks? Maybe it's time to fight fire with fire.

15 **JACOB HEILBRUNN** SADDAM SHAME The surprising thing about Clinton's Iraq policy isn't that he's gone soft on Saddam—it's that he was ever tough on Saddam in the first place.

17 **PETER BERGEN AND FRANK SMYTH** HOLY WARRIOR U.S. officials consider Osama Bin Ladin one of the world's most significant financial sponsors of radical Islamist terrorism. He's wanted for questioning in at least nine attacks. Now it looks like he may be behind the embassy bombings in East Africa.

20 **JOHN B. JUDIS** THE SPIRIT OF '68 Just as the lingering animosities of the Civil War dominated American politics in the last third of the nineteenth century, so have the leftover conflicts of the Sixties defined the debate between liberals and conservatives in our time. A new argument on the true origins—and legacy—of this century's most searing political epoch.

28 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: DEVOLUTION NOW, DECEPTION THEN *Your Friends and Neighbors* is savage; *The Governess* is too refined.

29 **FINTAN O'TOOLE** THE PLAY WAS THE THING *Kenneth Tynan: Letters* edited by Kathleen Tynan; *Kenneth Tynan: Profiles* selected and edited by Kathleen Tynan and Ernie Eban

33 **LEE SIEGEL** PERSECUTION AND THE ART OF PAINTING *Socialist Realist Painting* by Matthew Cullerne Bown

41 **RICHARD WHITE** COMPLEXITY IN ARMS *Tecumseh: A Life* by John Sugden

42 **CHARLES WRIGHT** POEM *The Appalachian Book of the Dead II*

46 **DANA MILBANK** WASHINGTON DIARIST: TAKE IT BACK

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 219, Number 9, Issue 4,363, August 31, 1998. (Printed in the U.S. on August 12, 1998.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 5 & 12, July 20 & 27, Aug. 17 & 24, and Sept. 14 & 21, 1998) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. For advertising inquiries, please contact Patty Duggan Shama at (202) 331-7494. Yearly subscriptions, $59.94; foreign, $99.94 (U.S. funds); Canada, $79.94 (U.S. funds). Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling). © 1998 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax 202-331-0275. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope (Internet mail address: submissions@tnr.com). Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 37298, Boone, IA 50037-0298. For subscription problems call 1-800-827-1289.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Where We Stand

A commentary on public education and other critical issues

Ignoring Standards

By SANDRA FELDMAN, President
American Federation of Teachers

Everyone claims to care about teacher quality. But you have to wonder when the people in charge of maintaining standards for teacher quality are so often willing to undercut them.

Look at the recent comedy of errors in Massachusetts. Officials there finally decided to give a qualifying test for new teachers. It wasn't rigorous, but the state at least set a decent passing mark (77 percent). Passing this kind of basic test doesn't guarantee that someone will be a good teacher, but it will tell you if the person can spell or write or do basic math.

When 59 percent of these prospective teachers didn't make the grade, state officials' response was to lower the passing score. Then, when there was a public outcry (which included AFT leaders), the state flip-flopped and reinstated the original passing score.

"Labor Day Specials"

So Massachusetts K-12 students were saved from having some new teachers who can't write a coherent paragraph and who think the word for what you do with a ruler is spelled "messure." But what does this incident tell you about how fragile the standards for becoming a teacher are—and how ready officials are to lower them?

I'm not just talking about Massachusetts, either. In districts where the conditions are rough and the pay is low—in other words, districts serving our poorest and neediest children, the ones who need the best teachers—schools often end up getting the least qualified new teachers. (We call them "Labor Day Specials.") They are hired with "emergency credentials" or misassigned to classes they weren't trained to teach.

And this problem will get worse. Many of the skilled and experienced teachers now in our schools will soon be retiring. That means hiring two million new teachers over the next decade. Where will they come from and how capable will they be? Will we see a continued lowering of standards as district officials scramble to fill those positions?

Advocates of "alternative certification" say the solution is easy. We should get rid of teacher standards altogether because the "bureaucratic red tape" involved in certification turns off many qualified people—eager young college graduates, brilliant historians, retirees from the military, and, my personal favorite, geniuses like Albert Einstein.

Now, I fully support good alternative certification programs that bring talented career-changers into teaching, or young graduates like the ones in Teach for America. But people who enter teaching by one of these avenues are often clueless about how to teach, so they need to be supervised by expert teachers. And if they decide to make teaching their career, they should demonstrate that they *can* teach—just like other would-be teachers. Knowing your subject is essential, but you also have to know how to put it across to kids.

Officials should stop hiring unqualified new teachers—now.

But those who think that programs like these will take care of the teacher-quality problem are not looking at the realities of the situation. In districts where attracting new teachers is already a chronic problem, "alternative" means "emergency." It means lowering standards, allowing any warm body to teach. The sad truth is, there aren't enough Einsteins or former military officers—or even idealistic young graduates—who want to become public school teachers.

So let's get serious about teacher standards. State and local education authorities should stop all emergency credentialling and out-of-field teaching, starting now. And they should allow parents whose children are in classrooms with "emergency" teachers to transfer their children to another classroom or public school with qualified teachers.

Make the Crisis Visible

Officials will insist that this will cause a teacher shortage crisis. But we already have a crisis in districts where lowering teacher standards is common; this will simply make the crisis visible. And if a bigger shortage of teachers results, the AFT stands ready to help.

Our locals can negotiate financial incentives that will encourage certified teachers to take on extra classes or become cross-certified in fields where there's a shortage. Incentives could also persuade some accomplished teachers who are retiring to stay on. Or retirees could teach part time. If there's a will, we will find the ways.

In the long run, policymakers have to face the deeper problem of attracting top-notch college graduates into teaching—salaries that value teaching would be a good start. Right now, we have to insist that the people in charge don't allow just anyone to teach our children. It doesn't take an Einstein to see the wisdom of that. ▮

***Where We Stand* is published once every month in *The New Republic*. To comment, write to Sandra Feldman, AFT, 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001.** **© Sandra Feldman 1998.** **Visit our web site (http://www.aft.org).**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

AUGUST 31, 1998

BLASTED

The bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam caught the leader of the free world taking care of other business. He was everywhere, Bill Clinton, when this terrible assault on American sovereignty and embassies—this terrible slaughter of Americans and non-Americans—took place: one fund-raiser in San Francisco, two in Los Angeles, a luncheon in Louisville, Kentucky, a dinner in Chicago for Senator Carol Moseley-Braun. Then back to Washington for more meetings with his lawyers. He promised retribution against the perpetrators; he invoked his favorite cant about the "global society" threatened by these bombings. But there was an oddly feeble and perfunctory ring to what he said.

The president was hardly alone in his moral and political distraction. At one White House press briefing in the aftermath of the bombings, the story about terrorism barely held the attention of the guild. Once the obligatory questions about the bombing had been asked and answered, it was back to what we have been gorging on: the Lewinsky affair, the dress bought at the Gap, and the stain on it. There was no way that Sam Donaldson and Wolf Blitzer could be diverted from what has been their obsession for seven months now.

Grant the world's wholesalers of terror their due: They can see into our condition and priorities and span of attention. They can divine our passions and our interests. They are astute enough to attack America abroad at a time when the moral authority of the president of the United States is under attack at home. Thus did they minimize the chances that the United States would hit back.

Not that those chances were very great anyway. For a generation now, ever since the April 1983 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, one American president after another has threatened retribution against outrages aimed at our embassies and barracks and airliners, but the threats have never really been made good. The sole exception was that big raid that Ronald Reagan ordered against Libya in 1986 as retaliation for a Libyan-backed murder of two American servicemen in a Berlin nightclub.

Otherwise, it has been a free ride for the terrorists; even Reagan tried to bargain with their Iranian sponsors over hostages in Beirut. Under Clinton, the United States has opted not to hit Qaddafi again for his refusal to hand over the two Libyan operatives who carried out the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988. Instead, we have kept economic sanctions in force—despite European complaints—and attempted to wait Qaddafi out. Now even that policy has been vitiated by the administration's recent decision, in tandem with Tony Blair's British government, to drop the demand that the Libyans stand trial in Scotland; instead, we may now accept a trial under British rules in a third country such as Holland. The administration says this is "calling Qaddafi's bluff." But what's the plan if the Libyan dictator, having achieved this much give in the American position, decides to raise the stakes?

There was a brazen challenge to our power in Saudi Arabia two years ago. Nineteen U.S. servicemembers lost their lives in a gigantic truck bomb blast at the Khobar Towers in Dhahran. Nothing came of the Clinton administration's threats to bring the killers to justice. Evidence points to Iran as the sponsor of the attack, but Saudi Arabia has prevented the United States from obtaining information the FBI needs to seal the case. Apparently, the Saudis are frightened of doing anything to offend the Iranians—who are nearby and could bring even more terror to their realm if the United States takes action. The Clinton administration has decided it had no choice but to acquiesce in the timidity of our Saudi allies.

Saudi sensibilities also appear to account for the fact that one Imad Mughniyah, of the Lebanese Party of God, is still free to operate in Beirut (a city which is, to be sure, under the political and military influence of Hafez al-Assad's Syria). American intelligence and law enforcement officials consider Mughniyah a suspect in the April 1983 bombing of the U.S. embassy in Beirut that killed 16 people; in the slaughter of 241 U.S.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marines in Beirut in October 1983; and in the June 1985 hijacking of TWA Flight 847, in which an American Marine was murdered. According to *The New York Times*, the FBI nearly arrested Mughniyah in 1995 when it learned that his flight was about to make a stopover in Saudi Arabia. But, rather than permit the arrest on their soil, the Saudis redirected the plane to Beirut. The Clinton administration sent Riyadh a strong letter of protest.

Meanwhile, the Clintonites have articulated a new policy toward Iran, based on the notion that the recent election of President Mohammed Khatami augurs a moderate turn in the direction not only of Iranian domestic politics but also of Iranian foreign policy. Whatever its other rationales, this policy shift may have signaled to Iran's hard-liners that terror has succeeded in weakening U.S. resolve, even as it gives them a new motivation—disrupting any U.S.-Khatami rapprochement—to strike.

The bombings in East Africa are yet another reminder that, even in the modern world, there is still such a thing as radical evil. There are certain people who kill Americans just because they believe it is the right thing to do—indeed, a blessed thing to do. Yet it bears repeating that the vast majority of those killed in these attacks on American targets were not Americans; indeed, *The New York Times* carried a picture of a Muslim funeral for one of the victims. (The religion and race of the victims were fortunately a matter of indifference to Israel, whose military rescue team was on the scene almost immediately, professionally taking charge of the search for survivors.)

The president and his foreign policy advisers often speak as if they appreciate the meaning of what national security adviser Sandy Berger last week duly labeled "unadulterated evil," but their policies and actions are not truly commensurate with their words. The threat of indictment does not strike fear in the hearts of those who plan attacks like those in East Africa—much less does it deter them. The only language international terrorists, and the nations that sponsor them, understand is the language of effective and appropriate force; yet force is precisely the instrument of national power with which the Clintonites are most uncomfortable. Meanwhile, out there, in the shadows, the plausible conviction spreads that you can attack American embassies with murderous results and pay no serious price. •

NOTEBOOK

SCORCHED: Last weekend, as Kenneth Starr was busy investigating President Clinton's sexual liaisons, rumors reverberated through Washington that Democrats were also looking into illicit sexual affairs—the ones carried on by prominent Republicans. The furor began when the webzine *Salon* breathlessly cited anonymous Clinton allies, who said they were already gathering dirt on GOP leaders in what would become a "scorched earth" strategy. As *Salon* explained, "Who among the congressmen is pure enough to pass judgment on the president's private life?" The news quickly spread to the Sunday talkshows. On NBC's "Meet the Press," a shocked Tim Russert excerpted such a long section of the story that his guest, Carl Bernstein, declared, "That's the longest quote I've ever heard on television." And Bob Woodward exclaimed, "This is a kind of dirt warfare...." It would be if it were true. But did anyone ever stop to consider how such a scheme would work? What paper would report such affairs, without the pretext of perjury or obstruction of justice? And what Democrat would be willing to play Linda Tripp in an election year? "People have seen too many movies," said Democratic Congressman Barney Frank, dismissing the alleged plot as ludicrous (a conclusion that was confirmed by our calls to numerous sources on the Hill). Indeed, the real White House scheme, if any, seems to be a much more familiar one: It is not to actually spread dirt but merely to tell reporters the White House is going to spread dirt. Who really got scorched here?

WHY, MR. STARR, WHAT A PRIVILEGE! The independent counsel, who has been vanquishing every last privilege the White House claims—executive privilege, attorney-client privilege, Secret Service privilege—now feels a bit underprivileged himself. The Clinton forces are enjoying the irony of Starr's petition to the appeals court arguing why he shouldn't have to prove that his office hasn't been leaking grand jury information. In that document, Starr cited a case on the "informer's privilege" to protect his office: "Long recognized at common law, the informer's privilege serves important individual and societal interests in protecting the anonymity of citizens who cooperate in law enforcement." The appeals court apparently didn't buy it. It allowed the investigation into the leaks, supporting Judge Norma Holloway Johnson's "show cause" order against Starr. The privilege, it seems, is no longer all Starr's.

A COMMON ERROR: The following correction appeared on page two of this week's *New York Times Book Review*: "A review on July 19 about 'Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard,' by Kiran Desai, misspelled the name of the novel's hero. It is Sampath, not Sanpath. The same review incorrectly identified the character who falls into a vat of broth; it is a spy from an atheist organization, not a monkey or Sampath in the form of a guava."

AND ONE OF OUR OWN: Last week's TRB column contained an excerpt from President Clinton's deposition in the Paula Jones case. Due to an editing error, the names of President Clinton and James A. Fisher, one of Jones's attorneys, were transposed. We regret the mistake.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SCIENTIFIC DEBATE:

Researchers: Don't blame heat wave on warming trend

—*The Seattle Times*, July 22.

Scientists: Warming may play some role in floods and heat wave

—Same paper, same day, same story.

(Thanks to Elizabeth Twiss, Seattle, Washington.)

HUNG JURY:

Federal judge upholds mob trial convictions

—*The Detroit Free Press*, July 31.

Mobsters' bomb convictions thrown out

—*The Detroit News*, same day.

(Thanks to Pete Waldmeir, Detroit, Michigan.)

BAD COPS, GOOD COPS:

Police OK in protest

■ UC-Berkeley's police review board absolved most officers of using excessive force in trying to contain a Proposition 209 protest last fall. Page **A3**

—*West County Times*, July 1.

UC officers used excessive force, report says

—Same paper, same day.

(Thanks to Donald Forman, Berkeley, California.)

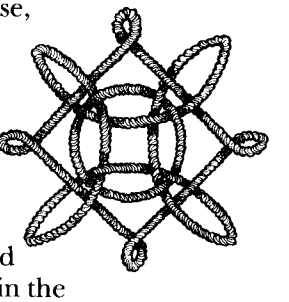
THE HARD QUESTIONS

GATSBY RETURNS

By Jean Bethke Elshtain

It's hard to find new sources of wisdom when it comes to the Monica Lewinsky scandal, so I recently turned to an old source—F. Scott Fitzgerald's masterpiece, *The Great Gatsby*. At one point in the book, the narrator describes two of the story's main characters—Daisy and Tom Buchanan—as "careless people." They go through their lives, and the wreckage piles up, but they assume little or no responsibility for the devastation they leave in their wake. "They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money, or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made...."

The same, of course, could be said of President Clinton and the people around him. It has been widely reported that the president's attack dogs stand ready, if asked, to go after Lewinsky. Indeed, they've done so, in dribs and drabs, already. If saving the president's career means destroying her in the process, so be it. She was notorious around the White House, they whisper to reporters; even after she had been reassigned to the Pentagon, she kept showing up at events—practically stalking the president. She's either a "nut" or a "slut"—or maybe both—since those seem to be the two labels we apply to women who once enjoyed or proffered certain favors but who no longer serve in the capacity to which they were assigned or for which they quite eagerly volunteered.



How sordid. How vulgar. No, these offenses are not impeachable. But these offenses are most certainly offensive, and we should say so. As I've written in these pages previously, the problem is not so much that the assignations occurred in the president's place of work, or that the affair involved a lowly staffer. No, the problem is that the president has dragged people into this ordeal, implicated them in its most shameful episodes, and then let them dangle slowly in the breeze. Think of how Clinton has treated Betty Currie. Consider the absurd cover story (she was Lewinsky's friend; that's what all the coming and going was about) and remember all the scurrying about retrieving gifts.

And for Clinton—actually, for both the president and, apparently, Mrs. Clinton—such behavior is by now practically second nature. Lani Guinier tells the story of how, in the midst of her Justice Department nomination debacle, she encountered Mrs. Clinton in the West Wing of the White House. Mrs. Clinton's breezy remark? "Hi, kiddo." Guinier, poor thing, had assumed they were friends. Whatever one thinks of Guinier's positions on racial issues—and I don't share them—this is pretty shabby treatment. But careless and ambitious people dump other people as easily as they bring them on board. Just like Daisy and Tom Buchanan did.

So the body count mounts, and the president's reputation sinks. Clinton's second term is in shambles, no matter what comes of this entire affair. Indeed, even the British seem rather taken aback—and that's saying something. After all, the Brits are generally content to simply expose the follies of public officials and leave the earnest moralizing to the Yankees. Yet, in recent weeks, the British media have given the Clinton scandal quite a bit of coverage, and they frequently invoke the term "reckless." Clearly they aren't saying something about Clinton's sexual habits. What they can't seem to understand—and what I, too, find mystifying—is how Clinton, so well aware of his vulnerability to sex

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

scandals, could risk his presidency for certain sexual favors from a 21-year-old intern. As a friend of mine puts it, this is the kind of thing that gives real affairs a bad name.

Torture the definitions as the president might, there is something definitely sexual about oral sex. And there is more. It is disproportionate—that is, the gratification is disproportionate to the risk. It suggests a kind of cavalier disdain for the rules that bind most mortals and help us to keep our feet on the ground. I'm not referring to the finer points of sexual harassment law—I'm referring to the dictates of what my late mother called "common sense." It all reminds me of a line from *A Man for All Seasons*, Robert Bolt's wonderful play about Sir Thomas More. As Richard Rich, an ambitious sellout who has just perjured himself in order to secure his new position as attorney general of Wales, marches past More, More stops him and asks to look at the insignia of office draped around Rich's neck. "Why, Richard," intones More. "It profits a man nothing to give his soul for the whole world.... But for Whales!"

Think about it. Risking a presidency. Putting family, friends, allies, and country through a tawdry spectacle. And all for, um, a sex act that probably cannot (or ought not) be named. Whatever happens next, this president who has spent so much time fretting about his place in history has secured it. In the dead of the night, perhaps More's words to Rich ricochet through his mind. So much forfeited—and for what? Couldn't the cavorting, including young women on their knees, have waited until after this relatively young president leaves office? What, after all, do you do for an encore? The mind boggles. But, of course, that's not how reckless people think. They didn't think that way in Gatsby's day, and, quite obviously, they don't think that way today. •

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

UNSEMENLY

By Dana Milbank

It doesn't seem to matter what new revelations Ken Starr unearths. The American public has reached the seemingly unshakeable view that Bimbroglio has gone too far. For some people, the point of no return came with word in the last couple of weeks that the presidency hinges on whether the commander-in-chief spilled his, um, genetic material on a dress. For me, further evidence came when TNR's publisher walked into my office with a MoniCookie. The publisher, Will Lippincott, is a tasteful and discreet man, but even he was giddy about the magazine's latest promotion: gingerbread likenesses of Lewinsky, the president, and the first lady. This sober journal of opinion has spent a significant sum to send the edible ménage à trois as a gift to our advertisers, and we're ordering more. Washington, needless to say, is gobbling them up.

All around town, the scandal smolders on, debasing politics and journalism further each week, as if either could afford it. White House correspondents have become gossip columnists. The now-redundant gossip columnists, in turn, are writing about White House correspondents. *The Washington Post*'s "Reliable Source," for example, broke the devastating news last week that Sam Donaldson, owing to scandal overload, had canceled a trip to his New Mexico sheep ranch. Others, too, have made the ultimate sacrifice; a guy at one of the newsmagazines was even called back from the beach.

Yet things are just the opposite at the White House, where half the staff seems to be on vacation. Mike McCurry, Erskine Bowles, John Podesta, Sidney Blumenthal, and Lanny Breuer are all out. Bruce Lindsey is recovering from back surgery. Political adviser Doug Sosnik, who actually did cancel his vacation to travel with the president, isn't doing much scandal-watching: He returned my call from a water treatment plant in San Francisco. The few who are at their desks still profess that they can't be bothered by the scandal hullabaloo. A couple of Clinton aides were fuming about a Bob Herbert column in *The New York Times* quoting a senator saying that "half the White House staff is distracted" by scandal. "The idea that we're all sitting slack-jawed in front of CNN with our computers off is a crock," says one Clinton adviser.

So why the calm? Do the folks in the White House know something we don't? At the moment, actually, they don't. There are probably only two people other than the first couple who know what's up—lawyers David Kendall and Mickey Kantor. The others are as much in the dark as those outside the building. Clinton aides are, of course, anxious and feeling somewhat betrayed by their leader. (Note their toned-down defenses and less frequent television appearances.) I asked several of the Clinton faithful to profess the president's innocence and to offer a simple explanation for the misunderstanding. Most declined. "I'm not sure whether he's telling the truth or not," says one normally steady defender.

And yet, there's virtually unanimous confidence in the White House that Clinton will survive. History, after all, teaches us so. Our political Houdini always manages to escape.

Oh, sure, things do look bleak right now. A dress with alleged semen stains sits in an FBI laboratory. The possibility of physical evidence cows Clinton's public supporters in and out of the White House, who are no longer sure the whole matter is a "he said, she said"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

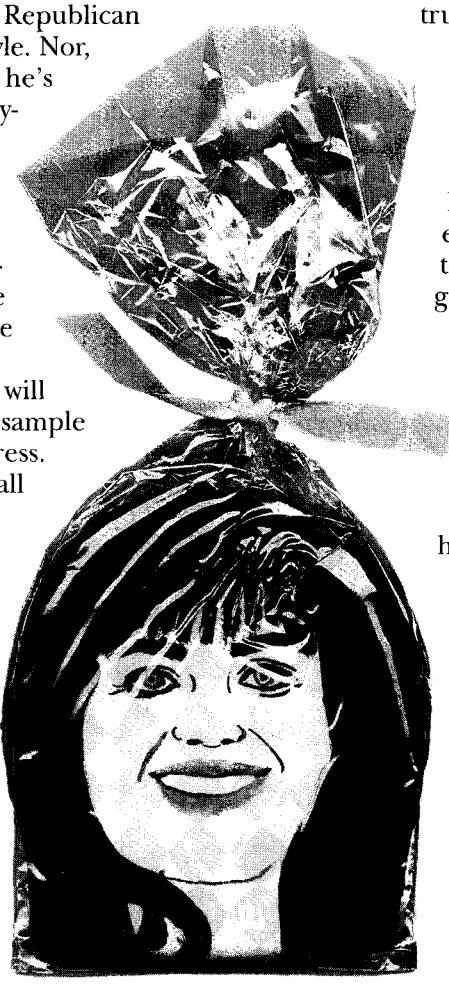
standoff. Meanwhile, Monica Lewinsky has reportedly spilled the beans and handed over the president's answering-machine messages. Even the scandal strategists see no way to escape either perjury or humiliation in next week's scheduled testimony. Or, in the parlance of one damage-control expert I spoke with: "He really is in a fucking box."

Meanwhile, the "mea culpa" boomlet, which promised an easy resolution, appears to have faded for now. The idea, a favorite of the political elite just a week ago, called for a humiliating confession and apology from the president, who would then throw himself at the mercy of the public and a Republican Congress. But this is not Clinton's style. Nor, most likely, does the president think he's done anything wrong, or at least anything other powerful men don't do all the time. But the best argument against the public apology is political: he becomes a lame-duck laughingstock for the last two-and-a-half years of his presidency. If he were going to cave in, he would've been far better off doing it earlier.

But keeping the denials plausible will also be tricky, particularly if a DNA sample very much like his own is on the dress. Perhaps he could employ what I'll call the Roger Defense. Brothers, as any geneticist will tell you, have similar DNA. Therefore, all the president needs to do is convince Roger Clinton to claim that it was he who spilled his seed on Lewinsky's dress. No doubt Roger would be willing to take the fall, and he might be convincing. Alas, Roger is only a half-brother, and his DNA may not be close enough. Should that happen, Clinton may need to wheel out the more complicated There's-Something-About-Mary Defense. This idea, taken from one of this summer's movies, offers a perfectly innocent explanation of how the president's sperm could have found their way onto a stranger's dress. The exact explanation can't be printed in a family magazine, but it will suffice to say that, in the movie, a woman mistakes some misplaced DNA for hair gel in an understandable mix-up.

Starr has apparently succeeded so far in making sure Clinton doesn't know about the dress's DNA content before he testifies Monday. But, even without the dress, the president will have trouble sticking to his denial. There are all those phone messages and gifts to explain. Also, White House political advisers have come to the conclusion that it just won't work to savage Lewinsky's reputation: she plainly doesn't appear to be a raving lunatic, and she doesn't seem to have either Linda Tripp's malice or a jilted lover's desire for revenge. "None of those is very salable to the public," says one scandal specialist. There may be contradictions in Lewinsky's account, but going after her character will only make the president look worse.

The best solution, Clinton loyalists figure, is a modified mea culpa—that is, without the culpa. He can give the grand jury the whole convoluted explanation, splitting hairs over definitions of a sexual relationship and, perhaps, admit he was drawing a distinction that doesn't make sense. But he must tell the truth because it's a political imperative. If he gets caught lying to the grand jury, House Democrats will abandon him. And, without the House Democrats, there's nothing between him and vengeful Republicans. House Democrats "can defend everything else," says one Clintonite, but lying to the grand jury "is a line they're not going to cross."



MONICOOKIE BY BAKED IDEAS LTD., NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Democratic strategists don't expect much presidential contrition, but they agree that the White House, to keep control of the story, needs to tell the world what Clinton says to the grand jury. "It's imperative that the president find a way to get his full version of events out proactively and completely," says Lanny Davis, his former scandal doctor. Davis would like to see Clinton in a friendly venue, like on "Larry King Live." But something less than that, even a well-organized leak, would do the trick. It's not as if America is clamoring for an answer. Democrats took some comfort in a Gallup poll, conducted August 7–8 after all the latest developments, which found Clinton's approval rating at 64 percent and his favorable rating—the more personal measure, and thus the one most likely to suffer from Bimbroglio—at an impressive 58 percent. Seventy-five percent thought he should not be removed from office based on what they knew.

If Clinton comes clean, even half-heartedly, he also has reason to hope for a gentle reception from House Democrats when Starr dumps his report on Congress, probably in mid-September. Politically, the timing couldn't be any worse for the Democrats, and Starr, if he submits the report then as people expect, will make himself more vulnerable to the Democrats' long-standing complaints of partisanship. A telling but little-noticed vote of confidence in the president came last week when the House took up legislation proposed by Joseph McDade and John Murtha that would set up a review board for federal prosecutors so they

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

could be punished if they violate ethics laws. John Conyers, the ranking Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee, offered an amendment that would allow for independent counsels to be similarly punished for ethics violations. The measure became a referendum on Starr. In the debate that followed, Democrats talked about Starr's leaks and abuses. All but four Democrats voted for Conyers's amendment, as did 48 Republicans.

That vote was likely just the beginning of a long (and probably bipartisan) effort in Congress to turn the independent counsels back into prosecutors, not roving inquisitors. It is, perhaps, the best measure of this scandal that the lasting reform it inspires won't be about the president's actions (new adultery laws?) but about the independent counsel's. Alas, there's a lot more sex to be discussed before we can get down to the serious business of reining in the special prosecutors. This fall's fireworks over the Starr report will only be a teaser for a potentially vast political battle over the scandal to be waged next year on the Hill. The scandal, whatever Clinton does, won't be going away anytime soon. •

How to tackle terrorism.

THE BEST DEFENSE

By Steven L. Pomerantz

After the bombings of U.S. embassies in Africa last week, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright went out of her way to tell the world what the United States would *not* do in response: "We are not a nation that retaliates just in order to get vengeance," she said, "[nor do we] forget our own legal system while searching for those who have harmed us." Nobody, of course, wants U.S. warplanes going off half-cocked, raining missiles on every state that could plausibly have sponsored the terrorist attacks. Nevertheless, Albright's statement, which other Clinton officials have echoed, is emblematic of our government's familiar and often futile approach to international terrorism—one that fails to take advantage of the most powerful tools at our disposal.

To be sure, when it comes to terrorism at home, law enforcement and the criminal justice system—our only available options—have been effective. The FBI has an outstanding record in this area of its jurisdiction: over the years, the bureau has prevented many potentially devastating acts of terrorism. When incidents have occurred, federal law enforcement has brought the perpetrators to the bar of justice—the convictions in the Oklahoma City blast being only the most recent example. Today, thanks largely to the work of federal investigators and prosecutors, most of the domestic terrorist organizations that have operated in this country, from the Order on the far right to the United Freedom Front on the far left, are crippled or altogether dismantled.

When it comes to terrorism abroad, however, the government has been far less successful at prevention and punishment—for reasons that, in large part, are beyond the control of the law enforcement officials dispatched to investigate incidents. Although both Kenya and Tanzania seem to be cooperating with the FBI, such unequivocal support from foreign governments is unusual. In recent years, even nominal allies like Saudi Arabia and Greece have been less than helpful when terrorists have struck at U.S. citizens on their soil, often because bringing the terrorists to justice would have caused political trouble for those governments. The Saudis, for example, have successfully stonewalled U.S. officials trying to investigate the bombing of U.S. military barracks there two years ago. And one commonly heard explanation is that the trail would lead to militant elements of the Saudi opposition party, which is backed by Iran.

And finding the terrorists is sometimes the easy part. Most terrorists operate with the quiet (and sometimes not-so-quiet) assistance of states hostile to the United States; when pursued, the terrorists frequently take shelter there, and it's nearly impossible to get them out. The most egregious example of this is the status of the two Libyans accused of bombing Pam Am Flight 103 in the skies over Scotland in December 1988. A U.S. grand jury has indicted the two men—both Libyan government intelligence agents. But Libya has refused to grant extradition to either the United States or Britain—and even economic sanctions have not forced a change of behavior.

There's no reason to expect a different outcome now, at least if the Clinton White House remains on the traditional course of U.S. administrations. It could take months or years for the FBI to sift through all the rubble in Kenya and Tanzania and then identify and track down the myriad suspects. By the time the United States could get its hands on the suspects—or, more likely, try to get some generally unfriendly nation to give up the suspects—more years would surely have passed. And that's assuming extradition was even possible. The message to new potential terrorists will be clear: Acting against the United States abroad is a low-risk proposition.

The fundamental problem here is that international terrorism is not only a crime. It is also, for all intents and purposes, an act of war, and the United States needs to treat it as such. That means, for starters, a significantly more aggressive diplomatic posture. There's no reason to tolerate Saudi obstruction over the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing. Yes, Saudi goodwill is valuable, but it's hardly worth allowing the killers of U.S. soldiers to go unpunished. There's also no reason the administration can't be firmer with nations known to be backing anti-U.S. terrorists—such

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as Iran, Sudan, and North Korea. Of course, diplomacy is less effective when it's not backed by the credible threat of force. And so the United States must be prepared to use covert action or overt means against terrorists and the nations that back them.

The United States has done so before, with at least some success. In 1986, the Reagan administration sent Navy bombers into Libya. The idea was to punish Muammar Qaddafi for backing and orchestrating the bombing of a disco in Berlin, Germany, frequented by U.S. soldiers stationed there. Although Qaddafi survived the attack (the administration denied targeting him, but his barracks were hit by the U.S. bombers), the strike had its desired effect. By most accounts, Libya grew more cautious in the following years. A message had been sent, and received.

To be sure, using force is not without risk. Military operations endanger the lives of U.S. soldiers and can create diplomatic problems with other nations. In addition, it may not be possible to finger individual suspects with complete certainty, making the selection of targets all the more difficult. Don't forget, too, that military action often claims innocent civilian casualties. And, while covert action can seem like a more appealing solution, we have enacted laws and established policies that ostensibly limit or forbid many of the actions we'd often like to contemplate—such as the assassination of terrorists and their leaders.

These are all compelling questions—the kind a democracy should ask. But faced with a foreign threat against U.S. citizens—that is, a war—even a democracy must base its decisions on different imperatives and standards of proof. The issue is not vengeance. The issue is exacting a price for terrorism so as to make it less likely that terrorists will want to strike again. A nation's paramount obligation is the protection of its citizens—countries, like individuals, must have core values over which they do not compromise or negotiate. The short-term costs, in lives, effort, and money, may be high, but consistent firmness pays long-term dividends.

We can never be immune from terrorist violence. We can, however, raise the price for those who attack us and the nations that sponsor and support them. In so doing, we can expect that, eventually, we will make the cost high enough to significantly reduce the number of international terrorist incidents directed at American interests. In Africa last week, bombs exploded. Shrapnel filled the air, followed by prolonged wails of suffering. No one who saw this horror on the nightly news can doubt the morality or justification for toughening our position on international terrorism. These were the sights and sounds of war, as well as of crime. The Clinton administration must start actively seeking new and more appropriate ways to respond.

STEVEN L. POMERANTZ is executive vice president of the Washington, D.C.-based Institute for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence. He is a retired FBI assistant director and served as chief of counterterrorism for that organization.

Going soft on Iraq. Again.

SADDAM SHAME

By Jacob Heilbrunn

Saddam Hussein is not back. He never left. The latest crisis—Iraq has announced that it is "suspending cooperation" with UNSCOM inspectors, as though it had ever really cooperated in the first place—demonstrates why the United States should have bombed Baghdad last February and why bombing remains imperative. Seen from the Iraqi standpoint, Saddam's move to buttress his political power is perfectly logical. The only ones surprised are the members of the Clinton administration, who thought they had buried the problem with the accords U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan negotiated last February.

Yet, while Saddam's gambit may not reveal much new or surprising about Iraqi intentions, it does confirm a shift in American policy. Clinton administration foreign policy has entered its third, and probably terminal, stage. The first stage lasted for about two years, when the administration championed what Madeleine Albright, then American ambassador to the United Nations, termed "assertive multilateralism." The idea was that the United States was one among a number of powers that would work through the U.N. to contain various problems that might emerge around the globe. Assertive multilateralism sputtered out in the sands of Somalia and the hills of Bosnia, as U.N. and American forces stood by helplessly while tinhorn despots ran riot. Then came stage two: Multilateralism gave way to lukewarm unilateralism. In 1995, the United States, under NATO's aegis, bombed Serb irregular forces and went on to engage in gunboat diplomacy off the shores of Haiti and Taiwan. *The Weekly Standard*, in a cover story, detected a new "Clinton doctrine." The Vietnam syndrome appeared to have been kicked.

But now that appears to have been a mirage—as beguiling an illusion as the image of a chastened Saddam obediently adhering to U.N. resolutions. For now we have stage three, and it looks awfully similar to stage one. Despite grumbling from a wide spectrum of pundits—spanning the spectrum from Tom Friedman centrists to Frank Gaffney hawks—there is nothing uniquely squishy about President Clinton's approach to Iraq. On the contrary, it represents a kind of reversion to the realist policies of disengagement that the Bush administration began to pursue in the aftermath of the Gulf war. Just as the Clinton adminis-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tration has adopted Bush administration policies toward China, so it has moved to adopt them toward Baghdad.

The forthcoming book by George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, reveals the continuity between the two administrations—and unintentionally illuminates the roots of the current impasse. Bush and Scowcroft make it clear that they never had any intention of going to Baghdad: it would have "exceed[ed] the United Nations mandate...." Nor were they interested in supporting a Shiite uprising in the south and a Kurdish one in the north, or "Iraqi malcontents," the authors' choice phrase for the people suffering under Saddam's tyranny. Instead, "we were concerned about the long-term balance of power at the head of the Gulf." As Bush and Scowcroft admit, they hesitated to force Saddam to sign a peace treaty personally and allowed him to use his military helicopters to crush the uprisings. "[I]t might have been salutary," they concede, "to have rapped the Iraqis on the knuckles at their first transgression." But coalition pressures—the wish of the Arab states to get the United States off Iraqi territory—prompted Bush to reduce U.S. forces, in his words, to "an absolute minimum." Throughout, Bush and Scowcroft seem obsessed with appeasing Arab allies and catering to the concerns of the United Nations—or at least using it as a fig leaf for further noninvolvement in Iraq.

The surprising thing, then, is not that the Clinton administration has lost its resolve; it is that the administration had any at all. When the Iraqi plot to assassinate George Bush during his visit to Kuwait was exposed, for instance, the administration lobbed a few missiles at Baghdad. It also resisted pressures to end sanctions toward Baghdad—sanctions that Russia, among other countries, was working to undermine.

The turning point, of course, came in February, when Saddam continued to defy U.N. attempts to inspect his so-called presidential palaces and stared down U.S. threats to bomb. By then, the will of the administration was weakening. The Gulf war coalition, always a rickety contraption, was close to breakdown as Saddam made inroads into the Security Council. The Clinton administration was arguing for a policy it no longer believed in. The debacle at Ohio State, where Madeleine Albright, Sandy Berger, and William Cohen feebly responded to a "town meeting" packed with the administration's detractors, highlighted a policy already in a state of collapse.

As a result, the administration embraced the deal brokered by Kofi Annan. The deal looked something like this: The Special Group of UNSCOM for the eight presidential sites would answer directly to chief inspector Richard Butler, and the accompanying diplomats would function simply as observers. Saddam's goal had been to get Russian and Chinese members onto the special groups. But it didn't quite work out that way. Iraqi attempts to subvert the guidelines have been too flagrant even for an UNSCOM commission to tolerate. This is why Saddam decided to brand the inspectors as spies who must be expelled.

The administration's response—to downplay the Iraqi provocation—makes a mockery of the promises the United States articulated back in March, after Annan returned from Baghdad. "We have to test the agreement," said U.N. Ambassador Bill Richardson, "and we have to make sure that Iraq is going to comply, that Iraq does not once again thumb its nose at the international community...." Writing in *The Washington Post*, national security adviser Sandy Berger declared, "If Iraq reneges, we will respond powerfully, from a position of maximum strength internationally." President Clinton, speaking before a conference of Jewish women, said: "Let there be no doubt, we must remain committed to see that Saddam Hussein does not menace the world with weapons of mass destruction."

Now that Saddam has ignored those warnings, the administration has abandoned even the pretense of employing military power. "Let's not raise the temperature before it's appropriate," said P.J. Crowley, a White House national security spokesman, on August 6. President Clinton has confined himself to a written statement that says the Iraqi stance is "unacceptable" and a "failure to live up to its obligations." Secretary of State Madeleine Albright even declared victory on "Meet the Press": "Saddam Hussein has wrestled himself to the ground. He is stuck in a box and he's thrown away the key."

Albright's position, and by extension the administration's, is based on the notion that Saddam has stiffened the will for sanctions in the U.N. Security Council. But this is doubtful—France, Russia, and China will continue to work to sap any economic sanctions effort. Albright, of all people, is implying that Saddam is a normal leader whose behavior can be shaped through diplomatic carrots and sticks rather than a despot willing to sacrifice his population to his plans for further expansion and destruction. As Richard Butler has made plain, Saddam's principal aim is to hide his incredibly potent stockpile of nerve and germ gas—weapons similar to those that he has not hesitated to employ on his own subject population.

Like the Bush administration, though, the Clinton administration has retreated behind the skirt of the U.N. Albright, for example, says that the latest Saddam episode has nothing to do with the United States: "You know what's happened, I think, is that this has been very clearly now turned into what it always has been ... an Iraq-U.N. problem.... This, at this stage, is not a problem between Saddam Hussein and the U.S." But the United States is the only major power that has opposed Saddam's attempts to develop weapons of mass destruction as well as thwarted his hegemonic ambitions in recent years. Given that Albright has herself described the United States as the indispensable nation, it seems a remarkable stance to take.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Meanwhile, the Clinton administration has systematically reduced the American presence in the Gulf. An administration policy review carried out in June has decreased the number of American forces from a high of 32,800 troops down to 19,650 and one aircraft carrier, the *USS Abraham Lincoln*. The Clinton administration, in other words, has accepted Saddam's definition of both the verbal and military terms of engagement. The policy the administration should have pursued would have been to recognize an Iraqi government-in-exile working to overthrow the regime in favor of a democratic alternative.

The Gulf war, in a sense, has not ended. As the contest with Saddam stretches into its eighth year, the Iraqi tyrant has not won, but he is winning. Already he has largely recovered from the temporary setback he suffered during Desert Storm. With Jordan's King Hussein and Saudi Arabia's King Fahd in poor health, Saddam may yet reemerge as the dominant leader in the Arab world. •

Is this the man behind the bombings?

HOLY WARRIOR

By Peter Bergen and Frank Smyth

Osama Bin Ladin is not an easy man to find, and he plans on keeping it that way. A multimillionaire from Saudi Arabia, he is considered by the U.S. government to be "one of the most significant financial sponsors of Islamic extremist activities in the world." Law enforcement officials from a half-dozen nations would like to question him about his possible role in at least nine terrorist conspiracies. More recently, Bin Ladin's name has surfaced in connection with last week's bombing of the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. He is "high on the list" of suspects, says one White House official. So maybe it's not surprising that, since 1996, Bin Ladin has taken refuge in one of the most inaccessible regions in the world: southern Afghanistan.

If you wish to meet with him, as one of us did for an interview that aired on CNN back in May of 1997, you must first get hold of an intermediary—like Khaled al-Fauwaz, a spokesman for a Saudi opposition group called the Advice and Reformation Committee. Al-Fauwaz lives far from the tumult of the Middle East, in the quiet North London suburb of Neasden. Serving flavored coffee and a plate of dates in his modest 1940s Tudor-style home, he is at pains to make clear that he does not work for Bin Ladin. Nor does he necessarily condone all of Bin Ladin's views. But, if you can assure him that you are not an agent of the CIA, well, then he may find a way to put you in touch with the shadowy Saudi.

And so the journey begins. Al-Fauwaz directs you to Peshawar, Pakistan, where you are to await further notice. Several days after your arrival, one of Bin Ladin's followers makes contact and instructs you to make your way across the winding Khyber Pass into neighboring Afghanistan. You arrive in the border town of Jalalabad and settle into a rundown hotel. And then you wait.

A week passes. Finally, late one afternoon, a curtained van arrives. You are bundled inside and the van sets off toward the mountains, along the Kabul road. Suddenly the van stops, and you are given blindfold-like dark glasses to wear as you change to a four-wheel-drive vehicle for the drive up rough mountain tracks. Several times during the journey, heavily armed men emerge from the darkness shouting for your convoy to stop. At one point you are told that, if you are carrying any type of tracking device, now is the time to say so. Later discovery of such a device, it is suggested, will not be pleasant for you. At the final checkpoint the guards run a beeping scanner over you and your bags to make sure you've been telling the truth.

At long last, your vehicle pulls into a rock-strewn valley about 5,000 feet above sea level—just below the snow line. It is near midnight. The air has a cold bite to it, and the ground crunches underfoot as you are led to a small mud hut lined with blankets. At one o'clock in the morning, Bin Ladin enters the room. You are told you have an hour to speak with him before he moves on. He does not like to remain in the same place for very long.

At first glance, Bin Ladin does not look like a master

PETER BERGEN, a former producer for CNN, traveled to Afghanistan to meet Osama Bin Ladin in March of 1997. FRANK SMYTH, a freelance journalist, has written about Africa and the Middle East for *Foreign Affairs*, *Jane's Intelligence Review*, and other publications.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

terrorist with a core of several thousand committed followers at his command and up to $250 million in his bank account. He is dressed simply—wearing a white turban and robe under a camouflage jacket and carrying a Kalashnikov rifle across his shoulder. But he is a tall man with an aquiline nose and an aristocratic demeanor. His followers treat him with the utmost deference, which he seems to take as his due. And, though he speaks in a near whisper, his talk is of bitter injustice and merciless revenge. The United States, he said in that CNN interview, "has committed acts that are extremely unjust, hideous, and criminal" by supporting Israel and imposing sanctions on Iraq. But it is the presence of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia, the land of Mecca and Medina, "the holiest place of the Muslims," that most outrages Bin Ladin—this, he says, is why he has declared a jihad on the United States.

Is this the man behind the carnage in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam? So far, no evidence links Bin Ladin to the bombings. And there are plenty of other possible suspects to consider—including a Somali and a handful of Sudanese and Iraqis recently rounded up for questioning in Tanzania. However, the coordination with which the two attacks were carried out suggests a well-financed and experienced group—the kind often connected to the Middle East.

And, among those with such connections, Bin Ladin is certainly a credible suspect. Last February, as the United States seemed primed to launch strikes against Iraq, Bin Ladin joined with several other leading Islamist radicals, speaking on behalf of the World Islamic Front, in calling on Muslims "to kill the Americans and their allies—civilian and military." Significantly, the CIA Counterterrorist Center issued a statement saying: "These fatwas are the first from these groups that explicitly justify attacks on American civilians anywhere in the world ... this is the first religious ruling sanctifying such attacks."

Then, on May 26, Bin Ladin held a press conference that, in the words of a State Department advisory, implied "that some type of terrorist action could be mounted within the next several weeks." And on June 21, according to Abdul-Bari Atwan, editor of the London-based *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* newspaper, members of the groups that signed the fatwa met in Peshawar, Pakistan, to set upon an undisclosed plan of action. In a June advisory on the fatwa, the State Department affirmed that "we take these threats seriously, and the U.S. is increasing security at many U.S. government facilities in the Middle East and South Asia." Africa was not mentioned.

That Bin Ladin's call to holy war is greeted with such gravity is a measure of his unique status in the world of terrorism. His was a privileged youth—the kind you would expect for the seventeenth of 52 children born to the founder of the Bin Ladin Group, a Saudi Arabian construction company worth an estimated $5 billion. Though by the tender age of 16 Bin Ladin had already become involved with Islamist political groups in his native Saudi Arabia, it was the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 that radicalized him. Only days after it began, Bin Ladin, then in his early twenties, flew to Afghanistan to help organize the first Islamist guerrilla fighters—young idealists like himself who flocked to the war from all over the Muslim world.

Bin Ladin eventually became a key leader of these "Afghan Arabs," whose numbers reached about 20,000. He financed housing for them in Peshawar, Pakistan. He bankrolled the Ma'sadat Al-Ansar military camp in Afghanistan, which trained both local and international volunteers. And Bin Ladin himself fought in many battles, including the 1989 siege of Jalalabad—a key contest with the Soviets. The USSR's subsequent withdrawal from Afghanistan made a profound impression: as Bin Ladin said in the CNN interview, "In this jihad the biggest benefit was that the myth of the superpower was destroyed."

Bin Ladin returned to Saudi Arabia a hero. But he quickly became disillusioned with the ruling House of Saud, which he characterizes as spendthrift, corrupt, insufficiently Islamic, and—most objectionable of all—subordinate to the United States. Soon he was at odds with the authorities, and in 1991 he and his immediate family—that is, his four wives and an unknown number of children—left for Sudan.

Sudan's ruling National Islamic Front (NIF) gave Bin Ladin a warm welcome, but it never quite trusted him, assigning military intelligence agents to keep tabs on their Saudi guest. Ironically, after working closely with Bin Ladin for four years, one of these agents—who has since left his post—became an admirer. According to the ex-agent, for a time Bin Ladin and the NIF "had a convergence of interest." The NIF has tried to expand the reach of political Islam into black Africa, and it has backed Islamist and even Christian extremist groups against the neighboring states of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Uganda.

Bin Ladin, however, may have even bigger aspirations. According to the ex-Sudanese agent, "his strategy is to form an international organization to head toward what he calls the *Khalifa*." An important concept in Islam, the *Khalifa* refers to a leader chosen by the most knowledgeable Muslims to lead the *umma*, or worldwide Muslim community. A Bin Ladin associate suggests it's unlikely that Bin Ladin aspires to be the *Khalifa* himself. Instead, he hopes to create the conditions for the *Khalifa* to emerge by uniting the most radical Islamist forces.

Toward this end, beginning in 1990, even before his own arrival, Bin Ladin brought hundreds of veterans from the Afghan war to Sudan. These holy warriors first came to help the NIF fight non-Muslim rebels in southern Sudan. Later they made up Bin Ladin's personal security force. According to the State Department, they also helped run at least three military training camps that Bin Ladin created and financed.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bin Ladin's Sudanese camps soon became important centers for international terrorists. According to the ex-Sudanese agent, groups came to train there from Algeria, Tunisia, Bosnia, Chechnya, the Philippines, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Somalia. In his CNN interview, Bin Ladin said that he has also dispatched his own followers to equally far-flung places—Bosnia, Chechnya, Tajikistan, and Somalia—while financing extremist groups in Algeria and Egypt.

The first successful attack on Americans that Bin Ladin is believed to have been involved in came in Somalia in 1993—where a total of 30 U.S. soldiers were killed in several incidents. In his interview with CNN, Bin Ladin said that some of the men involved in at least one of those operations were "Arab holy warriors who were in Afghanistan"—men who looked to him as a leader. The ex-Sudanese intelligence agent confirms this account, adding that the men had been trained at Bin Ladin's Sudanese camps and that "they set up a base in Somalia and smuggled weapons to it from Ethiopia." Does the United States believe Bin Ladin was responsible? Philip Wilcox, the State Department's then-chief counter-terrorism official, has said, "We take him at his word." And Wilcox has added that there is solid evidence that Bin Ladin forces also attempted to bomb U.S. servicemen in Yemen while they were on their way to the Somalia operation. A State Department report even claims Bin Ladin admitted to the bombing, which killed two people but no U.S. soldiers.

U.S. officials also have circumstantial evidence tying Bin Ladin to another famous act of anti-American terrorism: the 1993 bombing of New York's World Trade Center. After that attack, its mastermind, Ramzi Yousef, fled to Peshawar, Pakistan, where he lived in a house for Islamic radicals that Bin Ladin funded. In 1996, Yousef was convicted of a separate plot to blow up several U.S. passenger planes. U.S. officials say Yousef's convicted conspirator in that plot, Wali Khan Amin Shah, served under Bin Ladin in Afghanistan.

In his CNN interview, Bin Ladin said he had "no connection" to the World Trade Center bombing but did say that Sheik Rahman is a widely respected Muslim cleric against whom the United States "fabricated" what he called "a baseless case." Bin Ladin also insisted he had nothing to do with the bombings of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia at Riyadh in 1995 and Dhahran in 1996—though, again, he expressed admiration for those who carried out the attacks. All the same, U.S. officials would like to talk to Bin Ladin about both of these incidents as well.

Of course, at the moment it is the African bombings that are uppermost in the minds of U.S. officials. And one key reason to take a close look at Bin Ladin is that his followers are no strangers to either Kenya or Tanzania. According to a source within the Saudi opposition movement, for the past three years Bin Ladin has had a "significant presence" in both nations. What's more, this source says, two years ago one of Bin Ladin's key lieutenants drowned in Lake Victoria—which lies within the borders of both Kenya and Tanzania. That account is confirmed by a U.S. official who says that Bin Ladin's "head military guy" died there in a ferry accident in May 1996. The U.S. official says that the man, a former Egyptian army officer who went by the *nom de guerre* of Abu Abaida al Panjshiri, gained combat experience in the war in Afghanistan against the Soviets.

To be sure, it's highly possible that, even if Bin Ladin *is* behind the embassy bombings, he may do no more than express his "admiration" for the operation—not out of modesty but out of necessity. In 1996, the Sudanese government, under heavy pressure from Saudi Arabia and the United States, finally expelled Bin Ladin. Afghanistan, which is largely ruled by the Taliban, a movement of religious-students-turned-warriors who share Bin Ladin's extreme interpretation of Islam, may be his last refuge. And the Taliban, who are hoping for international recognition for their regime, know that enthusiastic support for Bin Ladin will only hurt their cause. So they have cut a deal with Bin Ladin: he can stay, but only so long as he promises not to participate in "political" activities in other countries.

But, although Bin Ladin has so far remained silent on the African bombings, his name has already emerged in connection with other, less circumspect groups. One organization that has come forward to claim responsibility for the bombing, the Liberation Army for the Islamic Sanctuaries, has cited the same objective that motivates Bin Ladin: namely, the desire to drive the United States from all Muslim lands, especially in the Arabian peninsula. The group explicitly told the Cairo Arabic daily *al-Hayat* that it was partly inspired by Bin Ladin. (Of course, all claims of responsibility in such cases should be greeted with a large grain of salt.)

Bin Ladin is also associated with the one group that gave warning of attacks before the bombings. A week prior to the blasts, Egypt's Islamic Jihad told an Arabic newspaper in London that it would strike back at the United States in retaliation for compelling Albania to extradite three Egyptian Islamist volunteers back to Egypt. The Islamic Jihad organization is one of the groups that Bin Ladin helped train in Sudan. And it joined with his organization in both the fatwa calling for retaliation against the United States last May and the meeting to discuss a more concrete plan of action last June.

Ultimately, it may turn out that Bin Ladin served not as a direct organizer of the African embassy bombings but as the inspiration for them. Bin Ladin's message and example are reverberating throughout the Arab world. As *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* editor Abdul-Bari Atwan explained it in a CNN interview, "Younger generations, especially those Islamic fundamentalists, are looking for a hero, and Mr. Bin Ladin fits the bill." •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What really caused the Sixties.

THE SPIRIT OF '68

By John B. Judis

This year Bob Dylan's album *Time Out of Mind* won the Grammy for best popular record, and teenagers in my local video store were waiting in line to rent *Don't Look Back*, D.A. Pennebaker's 1967 documentary about the irreverent Dylan. The National Organization for Women, the Consumer Federation of America, the Environmental Defense Fund, and other organizations from the Sixties are still influential in American politics. On the other hand, a host of grumpy social critics and cultural commissars, from Robert Bork and William Bennett to John Leo and Hilton Kramer, have continued to make a career out of denouncing that climactic period of American politics and culture. According to these critics, the "Vietnam syndrome" ruined our foreign policy, and the spirit of permissiveness and "anything goes" corrupted our schools and youth and destroyed the nuclear family. "The revolt was against the entire American culture," Bork declared recently.

Why all the fuss? As a political era—one characterized by utopian social experiments, political upheaval, and dramatic reform—the Sixties ended sometime during Richard Nixon's presidency. But the era left an indelible mark on the decades that followed. It vastly expanded the scope of what citizens expect from their government—from clean air and water to safe workplaces, reliable products, and medical coverage in their old age. It also signaled a change in what Americans wanted out of their lives. During the Sixties, Americans began to worry about the "quality of life" and about their "lifestyle" rather than simply about "making a living." The Sixties unleashed conflicts within these new areas of concern—over affirmative action, abortion, homosexuality, drugs, rock lyrics, air pollution, endangered species, toxic waste dumps, and automobile safety. And the era raised questions about the purpose of America and its foreign policy that are still being debated. The Sixties have preoccupied late-twentieth-century America almost as much as the Civil War preoccupied late-nineteenth-century America.

The difficulty in understanding the Sixties lies partly in the sheer diversity of people, events, and institutions that defined it—from John Kennedy's New Frontier to the Weatherman "Days of Rage," from the Black Panther Party to the Ford Foundation, from Betty Friedan and Ralph Nader to Barry Goldwater and George Wallace. Many of the books and articles that purport to be about the Sixties focus on one aspect of the era to the exclusion of the others. Todd Gitlin's excellent book, for instance, has only a passing reference to Nader and to the Sierra Club's David Brower but multiple references to Carl Oglesby, Huey Newton, and Staughton Lynd.

The nature of the Sixties has also been clouded by conservative jeremiads. Much of what disturbs the critics of the Sixties—from the spread of pornography to the denigration of the work ethic—was not the product of radical agitators but of tectonic shifts in American capitalism. Many of those who complain most vociferously about the Sixties' counterculture, such as House Speaker Newt Gingrich, are themselves products of the period. They no longer carry signs, as Gingrich once did, proclaiming the right of campus magazines to publish nude pictures, but, even as they denounce the Sixties, they echo the decade's themes and vocabulary in articulating their own political objectives. Unable to come to terms with their own past, they sow confusion about one of the most important periods in our history.

Like most periods described by the name of a decade, the Sixties don't strictly conform to their allotted time span. You could make a good case that the Sixties began in December 1955, when Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat in a segregated Montgomery, Alabama, bus, and only ended in 1973 or 1974, when the New Left lost its fervor. You could also make a case for dividing the Sixties into two periods. The first period—running from 1955 to 1965—spans the rise of the Southern civil rights movement and of Martin Luther King, the founding of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in 1960, the passage of the civil rights bills and Medicare, and the initiation of the War on Poverty. The second period begins with the escalation of the war and the ghetto riots and goes through the rise of the black power and militant antiwar movements, the growth of the counterculture, the rapid development of environmental, consumer, and women's movements, and the major legislative achievements of Nixon's first term.

This article draws from JOHN B. JUDIS's book on twentieth-century American politics, scheduled for publication by Pantheon in the fall of 1999.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On the most visible level—the level at which most books about the period have dwelled—there is a pronounced shift in mood during the escalation of the war and the onset of the riots in the mid-'60s. The antiwar and black movements became violent and apocalyptic, and the country itself seemed on the verge of disintegration. But the sharp difference in tone between the two periods obscures important continuities. Most of the major movements that began in the Sixties—the consumer and environmental movements, the modern women's movement—started in the early years of the decade. And the roots of the counterculture go back well into the 1950s, if not before. These movements, as well as the counterculture, took root in Europe, too. In the United States, the simultaneous presence of massive antiwar demonstrations, riots, and demands for black power merely lent those movements and the counterculture a frenzy and an urgency that they might otherwise not have possessed.

The first period of the Sixties looks exactly like a belated continuation of the Progressive era and the New Deal. Just as in earlier periods of reform, political change was precipitated by an economic downturn. Successive recessions in 1958 and 1960 helped Democrats increase their margin in Congress and helped put Kennedy in the White House. In 1964, Johnson, benefiting from a buoyant economy and an impolitic opponent, Barry Goldwater, identified with Southern segregationists and with a trigger-happy foreign policy, won a landslide victory, and liberal Democrats gained control of Congress for the first time since 1936.

Just as before, reform was aided by an alliance of popular movements, elite organizations, and pragmatic business leaders. By the early '60s, the Southern civil rights movement enjoyed enormous support in the North, financial backing from the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and editorial support from the major media. Business leaders, encouraged by prosperity after having endured four recessions in a decade, accepted Johnson and the administration's major legislative initiatives with equanimity. They didn't oppose Medicare (only the American Medical Association lobbied against it), and they actively backed the Great Society and War on Poverty programs, which they saw, correctly, as creating demand for new private investment. When Johnson appointed a National Commission on Technology, Automation, and Economic Progress, the nation's most powerful businessmen joined labor and civil rights leaders in recommending a guaranteed annual income and a massive job-training program.

The spirit of the early '60s—epitomized in Johnson's vision of the Great Society—was one of heady, liberal optimism. Many of the key leaders of the period, including Martin Luther King Jr., George McGovern, Hubert Humphrey, and Walter Mondale, were raised on the Protestant Social Gospel's millennial faith in the creation of a Kingdom of God in America. The political-economic premise of this optimism, enunciated in Galbraith's *The Affluent Society* and in Michael Harrington's *The Other America*, was that American industry, which was becoming highly automated, was capable of producing great abundance, but archaic political and economic arrangements were preventing many Americans from enjoying its fruits. The goal of such programs as Medicare and the War on Poverty was to allow the poor, the aged, and the disadvantaged to share in this abundance.

This first phase of the Sixties was also marked by signs of a looming redefinition of politics that would differentiate it from early reform epochs. During the Progressive era and the New Deal, politics pivoted primarily on conflicts among different sectors of business and between business and labor. The great battles of the first five decades of the twentieth century had been over the trusts, the tariff, the banking system, the abolition of child labor, and government regulation of collective bargaining. No legislative struggle attracted so many lobbyists, was fought as fiercely, and had as much impact on presidential politics as the Taft-Hartley labor bill in 1947.

In the early '60s, new issues that didn't fit easily within this pattern began to emerge. Americans became concerned not merely with obtaining lower prices for goods but with government overseeing the safety, reliability, and quality of goods. President Kennedy announced a "consumer bill of rights" in 1962. That same year, over the strong objection of the clothing industry, Congress passed landmark legislation requiring flame-resistant fabrics in children's clothing. In 1964, Assistant Secretary of Labor Daniel P. Moynihan hired a young Harvard Law graduate, Ralph Nader, to research auto safety. Two years later, amidst the furor created by Nader's work, Congress passed the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act.

In the early '60s, Americans also became concerned about the environment—not merely as a source of renewable resources or as a wildlife preserve but as the natural setting for human life. In 1962, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* became a best-seller. Congress passed its first Clean Air Act in 1963 and its first Clean Water Act in 1965. During the early '60s, American women also began to stir as a political force in their own right. In 1963, Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*, and, three years later, she and other feminists formed the National Organization for Women. While the older women's movement had focused on suffrage, the new movement reached into the workplace and the home and even into the private lives of men and women.

The new concerns about work, consumption, and personal life were part of a fundamental change in American culture that began to manifest itself clearly in the early '60s. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Americans had still adhered to the Protestant work ethic introduced by seventeenth-century English emigrants to America and memorialized in Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*. They viewed idleness and leisure as sinful and saw life and work as unpleasant prerequisites to a heavenly

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reward. By the early '60s, Americans had begun to abandon this harsh view for an ethic of the good life. They wanted to discover a "lifestyle" that suited them. They worried about the "quality of life," including the kinds of foods they ate, the clothes they wore, and the cars they drove.

This change was not the work of sinful agitators but reflected deep-seated changes that had taken place in American capitalism over the century. In the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, economic growth, and the growth of the working class itself, was driven by the expansion of steel, railroads, machine tools, and other "capital goods" industries. Workers' consumption was held down in order to free up funds that could be used to invest in these new capital goods. To prevent recurrent economic crises, American industrialists were always on the lookout—in China, among other places—for new outlets for investment in railroads and other capital goods. But, as the historian Martin J. Sklar has demonstrated, sometime around the 1920s, the dynamic of economic growth changed. The growth of capital goods industries became, ironically, a threat to prosperity.

It happened because American industry, like American agriculture, became too successful for its own good. The introduction of electricity and the assembly line made the modern factory so productive that it could now increase its output without increasing its overall number of employees. During the '20s, manufacturing output grew 64 percent, but the number of workers in capital goods industries fell by twelve percent. Expanding the production of capital goods no longer required the sacrifice of workers' consumption. By the same token, it imperiled prosperity by encouraging the production of more goods than those producing them—the workers—could purchase and consume.

During the '20s, Edward Filene and other far-seeing businessmen understood that the fulcrum of the economy had shifted from production to consumption and that, to avoid depressions, employers would have to pay higher wages and induce their workers, through advertising, to spend money on consumer goods. Filene advocated a different kind of "industrial democracy" centered on workers' freedom to consume. After World War II, businesses adopted Filene's ethic and his strategy. They paid higher wages and devoted growing parts of their budgets to advertising, which was aimed at convincing Americans to spend rather than to save. Advertising budgets doubled between 1951 and 1962. Businesses and banks also introduced the installment plan and consumer loans and, later, credit cards as inducements to buy rather than to save.

In search of profit, businesses also invaded the family and home. They sold leisure and entertainment on a massive scale; they produced not merely clothes but fashion; they processed exotic foods and established fast-food chains; they sold physical and psychological health; they filled the home with appliances and gadgets. They convinced Americans that they should care about more than just having food on the table, a house to live in, and clothes on their backs. They encouraged the idea that Americans could remake themselves—that they could create their own "look," their own personality. They encouraged the idea that sex was not merely a means to procreate but a source of pleasure and visual excitement.

The origins of the counterculture lay at the interstices of this new American culture of leisure and consumption that business helped to promote. The counterculture was a product of the new culture at the same time as it represented a critique of and a counter to it. It rejected Filene's suggestion that workers seek their freedom entirely in consumption rather than work. It held out for meaningful work, but not as defined by the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. In 1960, when Paul Goodman, writing in *Growing Up Absurd*, complained that "there are not enough worthy jobs in our economy for average boys and adolescents to grow up toward," he was not complaining about the lack of jobs at General Motors or on Wall Street.

The counterculture also rejected TV dinners and cars with tail fins that the advertisers urged Americans to buy, but it did so on behalf of more discriminating standards of its own. The critique of consumerism—articulated in the '50s by Vance Packard's *The Waste Makers* and *The Hidden Persuaders*—led directly to the formation of the modern consumer and environmental movements. And the rejection of sex symbols and stereotypes did not lead to a celebration of abstinence but to a wider exploration into sexual pleasure and to a reevaluation of homosexuality and heterosexuality. In the early '60s, all these concerns became the subjects not merely of books and small artistic cults, but of political manifestos and platforms and embryonic social movements.

The movements initially took root among college students and recent college graduates. Students who entered college in 1960 had been born after the Depression—they had been, in the words of SDS's Port Huron Statement, "bred in at least modest comfort." Living in a time of unprecedented prosperity, they could afford not to worry about whether they would be able to get a job. They were raised to think about the "quality of life" rather than the iron law of wages, even to scorn some elements of what was then called "materialism." By 1960, they had become a major social group, capable on their own of disrupting society and upsetting its politics.

The New Left movements of the early '60s attacked the new economy, but they, too, implicitly used the new standards and ideals it had fostered. SDS's Port Huron Statement condemned the "idolatrous worship of things" but called for "finding a meaning in life that is personally authentic"—a formulation that would have made no sense to an industrial worker in 1909. In Berkeley, the Free Speech Movement of 1964—aimed at reclaiming the rights of students to distribute political literature on campus—gave way the next year to the Filthy Speech Movement, aimed at defending students

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE BENEFITS OF THE JOURNAL BEGIN IMMEDIATELY.

BUSINESS NEWS YOU CAN USE WITH CONFIDENCE EVERY BUSINESS DAY.

The Wall Street Journal, the world's most trusted source of news and business information, is ready to work for you every business day. To help you make better decisions. More confident decisions. Whatever area of business you're involved in – from marketing and management to technology and finance – you'll find The Wall Street Journal indispensable to your business and personal success.

Free Personal Finance Guide
With "Decision Maker" Software!

The Wall Street Journal Guide to Understanding Personal Finance is what managing money is all about. This remarkable 176-page reference book gives you sound advice and information on the best ways to handle everything from buying a car and financing a home to investing for college and planning for your future. The guide and its easy-to-use software retail for $18.95 but they're yours FREE with your paid subscription to the Journal.

Take advantage of this great offer! Get 13 weeks of The Wall Street Journal and the valuable Personal Finance Guide and software – all for only $49! Mail the coupon now. Or call toll-free 800-228-6609.

FREE PERSONAL FINANCE GUIDE AND COMPANION DISK.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.
228 East 45th Street, Suite 1515
New York, NY 10017

Send me:
❑ 13 weeks for $49. ❑ 26 weeks for $89.

Send my FREE Guide with disk for:
❑ Windows ❑ Mac.
(For new paid subscribers only.)

❑ Check enclosed ❑ Bill me
(Payable to The Wall Street Journal.)

Charge to:
❑ AmEx ❑ Diners Club ❑ Discover ❑ MC ❑ Visa

Card No. Expires

Signature

Name (please print)

Address Suite/Apt

City

State Zip

Limited time offer – good in continental U.S. only.
©1988 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All rights reserved.

1NERE/3UATW

DOWJONES

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

against literary and sexual censorship. Over the next decade, these two movements—political and cultural—would develop in tandem.

The second period of the Sixties began with the Watts riot and Lyndon Johnson's escalation of the Vietnam War in 1965. These events signified and helped to precipitate a darker, more frenzied and violent period of protest. By escalating the war, Johnson broke a campaign promise not to send "our American boys to do the fighting for Asian boys." The war's escalation also threw into question the purpose of American foreign policy. Students who entered college in the Sixties had been imbued with the idea that America's mission was to create a democratic world after its own image. But, in Vietnam, the United States was backing a corrupt dictatorship, which, at our urging, had ignored the 1954 Geneva agreements to hold elections in Vietnam. The seeming contradiction between U.S. intervention and American ideals, Johnson's dishonesty and betrayal, and the rising list of casualties on both sides of the war inspired a growing rage against Johnson and the government. The antiwar movement split into a moderate wing that sought a negotiated withdrawal and a violent pro-North Vietnamese wing that threatened to "bring the war home." As the conviction grew that U.S. intervention was not an unfortunate blunder but reflected the priorities of American capitalism and its power elite, antiwar militants began to see the United States itself as the enemy. SDS, the leading student organization, imagined itself by 1969 to be the vanguard of a violent revolution *against* the United States.

The first ghetto riots took place in the summer of 1964 and then grew in size and strength over the next three summers. In the Watts riot of 1965, 1,072 people were injured, 34 were killed, 977 buildings were damaged, and 4,000 people were arrested. In July 1967, there were 103 disorders, including five full-scale riots. In Detroit, 43 people were killed, and 7,200 were arrested. 700 buildings were burned, and 412 were totally destroyed. The riots were spontaneous, but they were invariably triggered by black perceptions of unequal treatment, particularly at the hands of white police officers.

At the same time that the riots began, Martin Luther King Jr. attempted to take the civil rights movement northward to Chicago. Contrary to the fantasies of his current conservative admirers, King never saw political and civil equality as ends in themselves but as part of a longer struggle for full social and economic equality. King wanted to desegregate housing in the North (which was the key to de facto school segregation), improve city services for blacks, and gain higher wages and better jobs for blacks. He failed abysmally in Chicago. The combination of the ghetto riots and King's failure contributed to the radicalization of the black movement. By 1968, when King was assassinated in Memphis while trying to support striking black garbagemen, many in the black movement had turned toward insurrectionary violence. It saw the Northern ghettos as Third World colonies that had to be liberated from their white imperialist oppressors.

Both the radical antiwar and the black power movements espoused what they called "revolutionary politics." They saw themselves in the tradition of Marx, Lenin, Mao, Fanon, Castro, and even Stalin, but, by the late '60s, they had become unwitting participants in a much older American tradition of Protestant millennialism. As historian William G. McLoughlin argued in *Revivals, Awakenings and Reform*, the Sixties were part of a religious revival comparable to the great awakenings of the mid-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. At such times, the seeming discord between ideal and reality has inspired intense self-examination, the proliferation of new sects and schisms, and alternating visions of doom and salvation. While the first phase of the Sixties saw the revival of the post-millennial Protestant Social Gospel—the view that the world would end *after* the millennium—the second phase saw "pre-millennial" visions of the apocalypse and Armageddon occurring *before* the millennium.

The emergence of this pre-millennial vision was provoked by the war's escalation and the combination of rage and guilt (guilt at complicity in the slaughter of seeming innocents) that it inspired; the repeated visions of violence and destruction in Vietnam and in American cities, which reinforced an image of change as conflagration; the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy and of Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X; the Republican advances in 1966 and Nixon's election in November 1968, which discouraged New Left activists who had believed they could achieve majority support for their revolutionary aspirations; and the apparent success of the North Vietnamese in the war and the onset of China's Cultural Revolution, which suggested that revolution in the United States would occur only after a global revolution against American imperialism had succeeded.

The New Left of the late '60s dreamed not of America's salvation but of its destruction. If socialism or the "good life" were to come to the United States, it would be only after Armageddon—after a victorious armed struggle that would lay waste to the United States. The Panthers referred to the United States as "Babylon." When the Weatherman group took over SDS in 1969, it changed the name of SDS's newspaper, *New Left Notes*, to *Fire*. The new revolutionaries steeled themselves for a life of sacrifice and eventually death in the service of world revolution. Huey Newton, the cofounder of the Panther Party, described its program as "revolutionary suicide." Hal Jacobs, a Weatherman sympathizer, wrote in the movement magazine *Leviathan*: "Perhaps the best we can hope for is that in the course of the struggle we can develop human social relations among ourselves, while being engulfed by death and destruction."

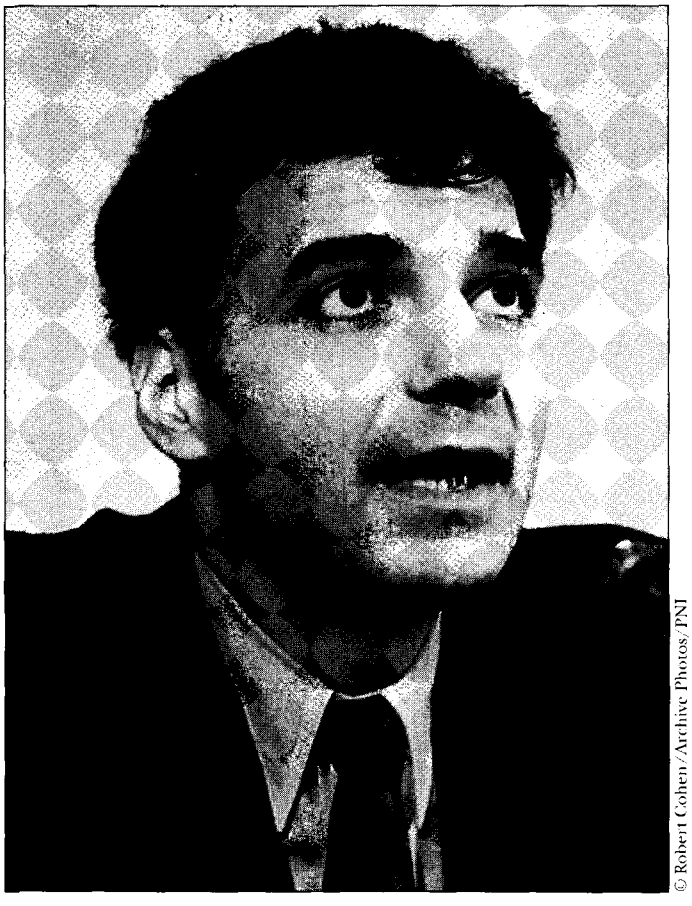
The vision of Weatherman or the Panthers perfectly matched that of the Millerites—the precursors of today's Seventh Day Adventists. They were preparing themselves to be saved in the face of an imminent Armageddon.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Even their organization resembled that of earlier Christian sects. The Weatherman group abandoned any pretense of building a mass movement. Instead, it sought to establish "revolutionary Marxist-Leninist-Maoist collective formations" that, through "criticism–self-criticism," would convert its members to true revolutionaries. Under Weatherman leadership, SDS, which at one point boasted 100,000 members, dwindled to several hundred aspiring visible saints.

During the late '60s, many of the people in the New Left, myself included, got caught up in the debate over class struggle, imperialism, racism, and revolution as if it were a genuine discussion based on reasonable, if debatable, assessments of world conditions. But others sensed that something was deeply wrong. In his 1968 campaign as the Democratic antiwar candidate, Eugene McCarthy continually frustrated his own followers by counseling calm and "reasoned judgment." Said McCarthy, "It is not a time for storming the walls, but for beginning a long march." Paul Goodman, whose writings had inspired the New Left, realized by 1969 that the political movement had turned unworldly even while it pretended to speak of world revolution:

> If we start from the premise that the young are in a religious crisis, that they doubt there is really a nature of things and they are sure there is no world for themselves, many details of their present behavior become clearer. Alienation is a powerful motivation, of unrest, fantasy, and feckless action. It can lead ... to religious innovation, new sacraments to give life meaning. But it is a poor basis for politics, including revolutionary politics.



© Robert Cohen/Archive Photos/PNI

RALPH NADER IN 1972

At the time, however, these voices were largely ignored. The question wasn't whether it made any sense at all to talk of revolution, but when the revolution would come and who would be on what side of the barricades.

This turn toward violence and revolutionary fantasy alienated many Americans and led to the rise of Ronald Reagan in California and George Wallace's surprising showing in the 1968 presidential election. That year, Richard Nixon ran a subtle "law and order" campaign to exploit the unpopularity of the antiwar and black protesters. Yet these movements still wielded enormous influence over the nation's political and legislative agenda. By the early '70s, they had helped force the Nixon administration to withdraw from Vietnam and had provoked Congress and the administration into pouring money into cities and adopting a strategy of affirmative action in hiring and federal contracts. During Nixon's first term, spending on Johnson's Great Society programs and on welfare and Food Stamps dramatically increased, while spending on the military went down.

There were two reasons for the movements' remarkable success. First, the movements were large and unruly enough to pose a constant threat of disruption. The major riots stopped by 1969, but the threat of riots persisted—both in actual fact and in the rhetoric and behavior of the black activists. In the summer of 1970 alone, city officials reported that black and Chicano militants made over 500 attacks on police, resulting in the deaths of 20 policemen. The antiwar movement also became increasingly violent. During the fall semester in 1970, 140 bombings occurred; at Rutgers, classes had to be vacated 175 times because of bomb threats.

Second, these movements had either the support or sympathy of policy elites. Some members of the foreign policy elite, acting partly out of conviction and partly out of fear of further disruption, favored immediate negotiation with the North Vietnamese and later unilateral withdrawal from Vietnam. By 1968, these included *The New York Times* editorial board and prominent members of the Council on Foreign Relations. Foundations and policy groups responded to the antiwar movement and to the riots and the black power movement the same way elite organizations in the early 1900s had responded to the threat of socialist revolution. They sought to tame the militants by helping them achieve their more reasonable objectives.

The Ford Foundation, the wealthiest and most powerful of all the foundations, with assets four times that of the Rockefeller Foundation, was particularly important. In 1966, Henry Ford and foundation board chairman John McCloy, desirous that the foundation play a more active role in national affairs, brought in former Kennedy national security adviser McGeorge Bundy as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the new president. Bundy threw the foundation into the struggle for racial equality. He helped new groups get off the ground, including La Raza and the Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund. But he also embroiled the foundation in controversy. Money that Ford gave to the Congress of Racial Equality in Cleveland went to funding a voter registration drive that helped elect Democrat Carl Stokes as Cleveland's first black mayor—in seeming violation of the foundation's nonpartisan status. In New York, Bundy sold New York City Mayor John Lindsay on a plan for community control of schools that put local blacks in charge of their own schools, which ended up pitting the city's blacks against the predominantly Jewish teachers' union.

While the late '60s are remembered mainly for the violent antiwar and black power movements, their most enduring legacy was the establishment of the environmental, consumer, and women's movements. By the early '70s, the National Organization for Women had 200 local chapters and had been joined in effort by the National Women's Political Caucus, the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws, and hundreds of small local and national women's organizations. The movement enjoyed remarkable success. In 1972, the year *Ms.* magazine was founded, Congress approved the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, strengthened and broadened the scope of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and included a provision in the new Higher Education Act ensuring equal treatment of men and women.

The consumer and environmental movements enjoyed equally spectacular success. Organizations like the Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, and the Audubon Society expanded their purview and quadrupled their membership from 1960 to 1969. They were also joined by new groups, including Environmental Action, the Environmental Defense Fund, and Friends of the Earth. The Consumer Federation of America, a coalition of 140 state and local groups, was founded in 1967, and Consumers Union, which had published a magazine since 1936, moved its office to Washington in 1969. These groups got the Nixon administration and Congress to adopt a raft of reforms from establishing the Environmental Protection Agency and the Consumer Product Safety Commission to major amendments to the Clean Air and Clean Water acts.

The key individual behind these movements was Nader. He used his fame and income from *Unsafe at Any Speed*—his best-selling book about auto safety—and his successful battle with General Motors to help build a consumer movement. Nader started hiring young lawyers called "Nader's Raiders" in 1968 and founded his first campus-based Public Interest Research Group in 1970. By the mid-'70s, he had founded eight new organizations, including the Center for Responsive Law, Congress Watch, and the Health Research Group, which played an important role in getting Congress to pass a mass of new legislation, including the Wholesome Poultry Products Act, the Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act, and the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

If Nader was the key individual, the key institution was once more the Ford Foundation. The foundation stepped in when the Audubon Society, worried about its own contributors, balked at funding the Environmental Defense Fund, the first public interest law firm designed to force business and government to comply with the new environmental laws. Ford also gave generous grants to the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund and to the Los Angeles-based Center for Law in the Public Interest. By 1972, Ford was providing 86 percent of the grants to groups practicing consumer and environmental public interest law.

Unlike the later antiwar and civil rights movements, the environmental and consumer movements enjoyed enormous popular support. Republican and Democratic politicians vied to sponsor environmental and consumer legislation. In 1970, Nixon and Edmund Muskie, who was planning to run for president in 1972, got into a bidding war for the movements' support, with each championing successively tougher revisions to the Clean Air Act. Businesses might have fought environmental and consumer legislation, but, in these years, they were restrained by a combination of complacency and defensiveness. From February 1961 to September 1969, the United States enjoyed the longest consecutive boom on record. The economy grew by 4.5 percent a year, compared to 3.2 percent in the '50s. Secure in their standing, only 50 corporations had registered lobbyists stationed in Washington in the early '60s.

In the mid-'60s, as the country's mood darkened, the public's opinion of business began to fall precipitously, but, as David Vogel recounts in *Fluctuating Fortunes*, business's initial response was to stress corporate social responsibility and to accommodate the demands of the consumer and environmental movements. While the auto and tobacco companies took umbrage at regulations targeted at them, business as a whole thought it could adapt the new environmental and consumer legislation to its own ends just as it had done earlier with the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Federal Trade Commission. A *Fortune* survey in February 1970 found 53 percent of Fortune 500 executives in favor of a national regulatory agency and 57 percent believing that the federal government should "step up regulatory activities." In a spirit of social responsibility, 85 percent of the executives thought that the environment should be protected even if that meant "reducing profits."

In the second phase of the Sixties, the counterculture spread from Berkeley, Madison, Ann Arbor, and Cambridge to almost every high school and college in America. Teenagers from pampered suburban homes who had never read Allen Ginsberg or Nelson Algren nevertheless denounced the "rat race" and the "neon wilderness." In extensive polls and interviews conducted from 1968 to 1974, Daniel Yankelovich saw steadily growing "acceptance of sexual freedom," rejection of "materialism," opposition to the laws

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

against marijuana, and questioning of "such traditional American views as putting duty before pleasure [and] saving money regularly."

Like the other movements of the Sixties, the counterculture had its theorists, and its own millennial vision, which propounded a utopian version of consumer capitalism. Sociologist Theodore Roszak, ecologist Murray Bookchin, Yale Law School professor Charles Reich, and other post-millennialists foresaw a transformation in human nature and human arrangements that would subordinate work to play and science to art. The instrument of change would not be a political movement but the change in consciousness that had already begun among college students. Reich saw the essence of change in the new "freedom of choosing a lifestyle." Work would become an "erotic experience, or a play experience."

Reich attributed the new counterculture to capitalism—what he called the "machine." As capitalism became capable of producing more goods than it could sell, it was forced to devise ways to expand people's needs and wants. It had to transform people themselves, moving them from the work ethic of "Consciousness II" to the lifestyle ethic of "Consciousness III," where a human being could "develop the aesthetic and spiritual side of his nature."

Reich, Roszak, and other spokesmen for the counterculture did not exalt idleness but artistic expression. They didn't promote pornography but eroticism. Most of what their current critics like Bork and Kramer lay at their door was attributable to consumer capitalism rather than the counterculture. And, while much of their vision of the future appears daffy, they—in contrast to their latter-day critics—realized that America had turned a corner. What they didn't understand was exactly where it was headed.

As a political era, the Sixties came to a close around 1973. In January 1973, Nixon signed a peace accord with North Vietnam, which not only put an end to the antiwar movement but, in doing so, removed a major source of political mobilization and energy. In 1969, the booming war economy also began a six-year slowdown. This slowdown, aggravated by the energy crisis of 1973, put a damper on the counterculture. Students became focused on preparing for jobs and careers rather than discovering the meaning of life.

The downturn of the early '70s, combined with a wave of strikes that began in 1969 and with growing competition from Japan and Western Europe, made American business leaders lose their tolerance for new government intervention. They began to push hard to limit new consumer and environmental regulations. They began hiring lobbyists and establishing corporate offices in Washington and funding policy groups and think tanks, and, by the mid-'70s, many business leaders were beginning to look fondly upon Republican conservatives who combined their opposition to the social movements of the Sixties with support for business's agenda of "deregulation." By 1978, these two groups were setting the nation's political and legislative agenda, even with Democrats in control of the White House and Congress.

What, then, is the legacy of the Sixties? It endures, for one thing, in Bill Clinton's passionate commitment to racial reconciliation and in Al Gore's ardent environmentalism. It also could be found in Clinton's mistaken belief after November 1992 that he could fashion a "new beginning," including a wildly ambitious health care plan. But the era also endures ironically in its most bitter opponents—Gingrich, Dick Armey, Phil Gramm, and many of the leaders of the religious right. Gingrich and Armey's fantastic belief that they had led a "revolution" in November 1994 was straight out of the late '60s. So, too, is Gingrich's futurism and his insistence that Americans should have the highest "range of choices of lifestyle." Within the religious right, Weatherman has been reincarnated as Operation Rescue, and the communards of the Sixties have become the home-schoolers of the 1990s.

The Sixties clearly bequeathed political conflicts that continue to seethe but also made lasting contributions that cannot easily be undone. Medicare and the environmental and consumer legislation of Nixon's first term have withstood furious attacks from conservatives and business. While the issues of urban poverty and decay that King addressed in the last years of his life remain unsettled, the premises of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 are no longer open to question.

The Sixties enlarged the scope of politics by adding new issues and constituencies to the traditional mix created by business and labor, and they changed the way politics was conducted. A proliferation of new movements, interests, and interest groups—some of them funded door-to-door and others through the mail—shifted the struggle to change the country from the halls of Congress to the media and even to the streets. By the 1980s, business lobbyists were employing "grassroots" techniques developed by shaggy protesters from the Sixties.

Perhaps most important of all, America passed irreversibly during the Sixties from a culture of toil, sacrifice, saving, and abstinence to a culture of consumption, lifestyle, and quality of life. The agent of this change was not the counterculture but consumer capitalism, to which the counterculture, like the religious right, is a reaction. This new stage of capitalism has opened to the average American possibilities of education, leisure, and personal fulfillment that had been reserved in the past for the upper classes. It has also, of course, exalted consumption over production, razed redwoods, turned shorelines into boardwalks, flooded cyberspace with spam, used sex to sell detergents, and helped to transform many American teenagers into television zombies. If our cultural commissars would understand this distinction between the culture of capitalism and the counterculture, perhaps they would waste less of our time blaming the radicals of the Sixties for all of today's problems and turn their attention to the real causes. •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Devolution Now, Deception Then

A young man lying in bed is caressing the breast of a young woman lying next to him. "How does that feel?" he asks. End of the film.

It's the perfect finish. This quasi-clinical tone, this sense of sex as physical therapy, dominates the whole picture. It opens with that same young man practicing the moves of intercourse, not masturbating, and it progresses in that gymnastic mode right to the breast-fondling finish. **Your Friends and Neighbors** (Gramercy), written and directed by Neil LaBute, continues the exploration of contemporary sexual attitudes that he began last year with his extraordinary *In the Company of Men.* Now LaBute takes the inquiry further, into almost laboratory-controlled coolness.

It's possibly inaccurate to talk flatly of LaBute's first and second films because we're told that he wrote both screenplays at about the same time. But the one that he made first is a contrast with the new one. *In the Company of Men* concerned the figurative revenge that two young men wreak on women by wooing a young woman individually and abandoning her together. The vindictive prank is spoiled by the inception of deep feeling in the young woman and in one of the young men.

Not in *Your Friends and Neighbors.* No feeling irrupts here except sexual desire. LaBute said that his first film was inspired by Restoration comedy; now LaBute takes that Congreve-Vanbrugh view even further—people who think themselves masters of the universe without realizing how constricted that universe is. This time we go to frigid extremes.

A sort of gavotte, then, mostly horizontal, involving two young married couples, along with a young man and a young woman, in which partners are changed. The plot doesn't need sketching. Let's just say that the setting is urban and that each of the two couples has dissatisfactions and itches, and that each individual in the quartet is in some measure emotionally slothful while sexually vain and demanding. The two single people act as variant partners, including a lesbian interlude for one of the wives.

Your Friends and Neighbors is about ego and gratification. Our era was called the age of narcissism by Christopher Lasch; LaBute proposes the age of hedonism. Instead of the infant bawling for his toy, with pleasure as his sole standard, we have adults crying for sex, with pleasure as their prime standard. The net effect of the film is rather frightening, predictive of an emotionally arid world.

LaBute's directing here is somewhat different from his first film. He now uses more editing, more intercutting within a scene, less crystallizing of a scene in one continuous shot. He likes recurrent visual themes. For instance, the single woman works in an art gallery, and every one of her encounters with people in the cast takes place in that gallery in the same shot, the same framing. LaBute's dialogue reminds us that, along with that of such others as Hal Hartley and Jim Jarmusch and Whit Stillman, the sheer writing, these days, of some American films is remarkably fine.

LaBute has cast his film to match, with people who can handle his dialogue neatly. As one of the husbands, here is Ben Stiller again, selling his gently aggressive urbanity. Aaron Eckart, who was the nastier of the two men in LaBute's first film, is softer here as the other husband. Jason Patric is suitably dangerous and repellent as a freelance stallion. Nastassja Kinski, her being seemingly refreshed, is supple as the art-gallery woman. Amy Brenneman is sufficiently uneasy as one of the wives. A special bow to Catherine Keener, the other wife. In *Walking and Talking* and *Living in Oblivion,* among other films, she showed a unique quality, an ability to treat candid material with almost surgical precision, cool but fundamentally comic. That quality flowers here.

The Governess (Sony Pictures Classics) has a fascinating premise which it quickly disregards. Set in early Victorian Britain, it opens with immersion in the lives of well-to-do London Jews. Under the credits we hear a cantor, and our first view is of top-hatted men in a synagogue, with women in the balcony looking on. We move to the luxurious home of the da Silva family, members of the congregation. Soon after, the father meets a sudden, violent death. The older daughter, Rosina, must find work. Well-educated, she gets a post as a governess with a very upper-class gentile family who live on a Scottish island. (How her 20 pounds a year, an accurate figure for the time, are going to support her family is not clear.)

Rosina has obtained her job by using an assumed gentile name, Mary

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Out of Sight. *A cynical, witty, sexy comedy-drama, about a bank robber (George Clooney) and an FBI agent (Jennifer Lopez). Neatly turned. (Reviewed 8/3/98)* **Saving Private Ryan.** *Steven Spielberg's World War II epic thins out as it goes, becoming merely a well-made war movie. But the opening sequence—D-Day—is a huge masterpiece in itself. (8/24/98)* **The Thief.** *Excellently made Russian comedy-drama about a smooth crook, the woman besotted with him, and her son. Underneath the smooth plot is a grim political allegory. (8/10/98)* **The Truman Show.** *This satire, about a man whose entire life has been—unknown to him—broadcast on TV, slashes most sharply at those who watch the show. Us. (6/29/98)* **—SK**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Blackchurch, and as Miss Blackchurch she is welcomed into the huge house. She takes charge of the family's small daughter, under the supervision of the haughty, frustrated mother, and she occasionally glimpses the father who, in a wing of the house, is busy with his scientific work.

Primed, we look forward to a drama in which Rosina's true identity is discovered and, more interestingly, Rosina suffers the effects of the masquerade on herself. But there's not one word or whisper about any of this. What we get is a romantic drama, an affair that she has with the head of the house (as she helps him develop the science of photography on which he is experimenting) and a subsequent emotional tangle with his son just back from Oxford. Although her true identity eventually comes out, she leaves the house because of the romantic tempest, not because of who she is. The father attempts to woo her again in London, but she declines, not because she is Jewish, but because she doesn't want him any more. In short, through all of the central story, she might as well have been the Anglican she pretends to be. Her Jewish self plays no part.

Sandra Goldbacher wrote and directed the film, her first; and though the script lacks unity and point, the dialogue as such is well-wrought. Best of all, Goldbacher has an extraordinary eye. With Ashley Bowe's camera—and with the beauty of the Scottish isle—she lavishes lovely pictures on us. One is unforgettable. In a long shot in late afternoon, we see a stone pier with Rosina at one end of it, just arrived, waiting with her bags. To her slowly comes a one-horse shay. Exquisite.

As Rosina, Minnie Driver is commanding, easy, and vivid in period style. Lately she has appeared in American films, such as *Good Will Hunting*; back in her native Britain she is being used to her, and our, greater advantage. And there's further evidence here of Tom Wilkinson's power. His most recent performance in a long career was as the Marquis of Queensberry in *Wilde*, where he growled along to a striking portrait; as Rosina's employer and lover, Wilkinson creates a sincere man troubled by uncertainties and conditioning. •

The Play Was the Thing

BY FINTAN O'TOOLE

Kenneth Tynan: Letters edited by Kathleen Tynan

(Random House, 665 pp., $30)

Kenneth Tynan: Profiles selected and edited by Kathleen Tynan and Ernie Eban

(Random House, 541 pp., $20)

In Havana, shortly after the Cuban revolution, Kenneth Tynan had what he called "the unnerving experience" of introducing Tennessee Williams to Fidel Castro. It is hard to think of anyone better suited to the job. Many intellectuals of the day could trace the baroque byways of psychic and sexual hurt in Williams's life and work. Many could be stirred by the political promise of Castro's romantic revolution. Few could bridge the public and the private, the epic and the erotic, as gracefully as Tynan did in his brilliant career as a critic, a theatrical agitator, and a cultural provocateur.

Even now, reading his late wife's superbly annotated collection of his letters, it is impossible not to wonder at the capaciousness of a personality that could be at once so hedonistic and so moral, so curt and so ardent. Readers of his essays and his reviews already know that Tynan was a considerable practitioner of two critical methods, that of being very intelligent and that of writing very well. His letters reveal another of the qualities that made him so effective. He had something that went way beyond good taste: a range of responses so broad that he could almost always find precisely the right one for every occasion. And he could do it in the theater because he had long practiced it in the creation of his own public persona.

Tynan died in 1980. He would be just 71 were he still alive, but already he seems to belong to another age. It is now almost impossible, for a start, to imagine that a writer of his immense talent would see drama criticism as the best way to exercise it. Indeed, it was obvious even to Tynan that he belonged to an endangered species. In one of his last letters, written in May 1980 to his erstwhile sparring partner Harold Hobson, the theater critic of the *Sunday Times*, Tynan remarks that "the trouble with our successors is that nothing seems *at stake* for them."

This is more than the usual old-timer's complaint about the awfulness of the younger generation. Theater no longer holds in contemporary culture the place that it held when Tynan began to write about it. What smart 19-year-old now feels that witnessing a dramatic performance is a pivotal event in one's life, as the smart 19-year-old Tynan did when he saw Frederick Valk play Othello? He wrote to his friend Julian Holland the day after seeing it that Valk's performance was an occurrence of the same order as the explosion of the hydrogen bomb. To him, it was "an *event* happening of comparable magnitude to whatever may have gone on at Bikini [Atoll]. As a thing to have happened to one, as a thing to have witnessed and survived, Valk's Othello is unique." (The analogy with Bikini Atoll betrays Tynan's tendency to resort to hyperbole, his need at times to be a worshipful fan as well as a discerning critic.) This sense of moment, this feeling that what is happening on stage really and truly matters, continued to animate Tynan's best writing, but it is now all but gone.

Its presence gives Tynan's work an enthrallingly exotic quality—and all the more so because his fascination with theater was not that of an isolated innocent yet to feel the allure of the cinema. Quite the contrary. He was an incorrigible movie buff. He named his daughter Tracy after the character played by Katherine Hepburn in *The Philadelphia Story*. He idolized Orson Welles, who became for him almost a father-figure. He worked as a film script editor for Ealing Studios in the 1950s, and he collaborated with Roman Polanski on the script for the latter's intriguing film version of *Macbeth*. That someone could know and love the cinema so deeply and still place a higher value on the immediacy and danger of live performance: by the lights of the 1990s, that is truly perverse.

Tynan seems distant for another reason, too. His style and his attitudes were formed at a time when there was not yet, in mainstream culture at least, a clear

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

separation between gay and straight sensibilities. It was a part of Tynan's richness that he reversed the usual stereotype by being a kind of closet heterosexual. Kathleen Tynan describes him as "robustly effete," and the phrase captures his unusual combination of camp and consequence.

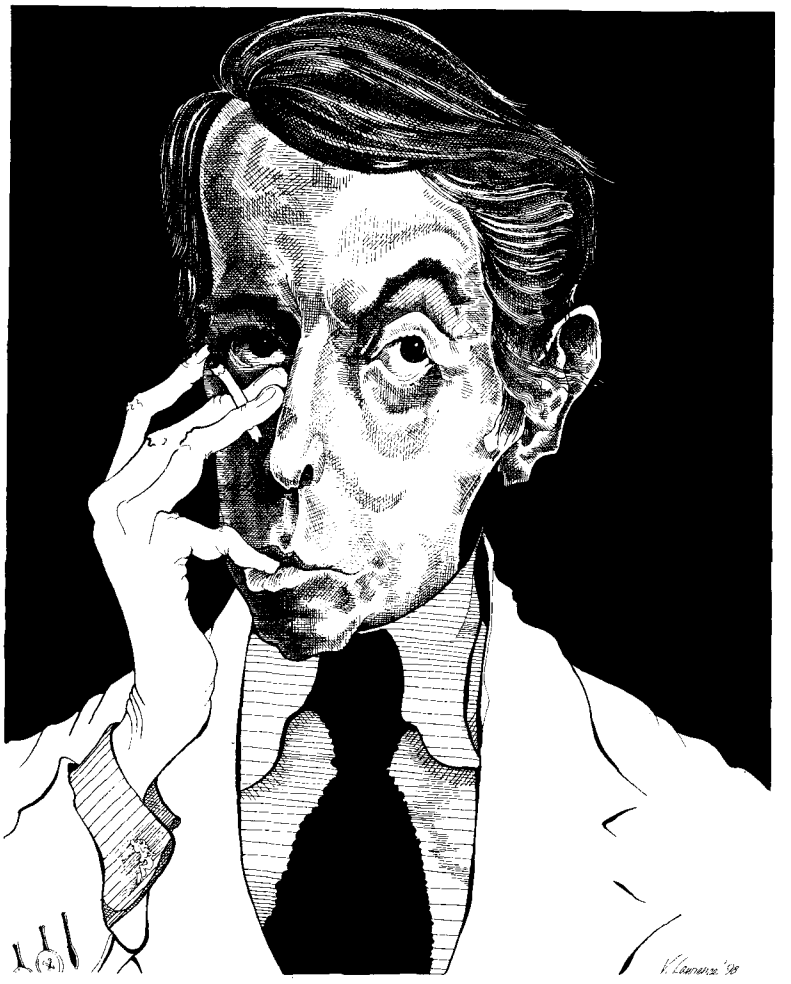
Everything about Tynan, except his sexual preferences, seemed stereotypically gay. The gay critic James Agate asked Tynan, then a schoolboy, "Are you a homosexual, my boy?" He replied, with his elegant stammer, "I'm a-f-f-fraid not." It is, for all its terseness, an eloquently wistful answer. A heterosexual boy in the 1940s might be expected to take profound offense at such a question. Tynan's riposte suggests that not being a homosexual was, for him, a matter of some regret.

He was in fact such an unshakeably enthusiastic pursuer of women that he quite enjoyed the common assumption, expressed by the producers of a semi-nude revue in London for whom he auditioned just after he left Oxford, that he was "much too homosexual." In a letter written when he was 16, Tynan quotes with evident delight the remark of a friend: "To carry your character to its logical conclusion, Ken, you ought to be rabidly homosexual." His reply a few years later to an article by a fellow undergraduate at Oxford University, more or less accusing him of being gay, is not outraged but playful: "I should be a poor fool to deny my physical fragility; but the tough sinews of my mind and the nearly maniacal masculinity of my physical reflexes insist that I am very far from effeminacy." And how many fathers in the early 1970s, even among the enlightened liberal intelligentsia, would make this joke about a new-born son: "Thank God ... no bullet-headed thug but a long-lipped, long-eyelashed charmer of distinctly feminine looks. I have entered him for the Royal Ballet School and am buying him a few nice frocks"?

This willingness to make a mockery of sexual categories was not just an incidental aspect of Tynan's character. It was also a large part of what defined him as a critic. He had a profound sense of the essentially antic spirit of great theater, its polymorphous perversities and its mischievous transgressions. He was extraordinarily receptive to the physical presence of actors and actresses. His attraction to the theater was essentially carnal. "Without flesh," he writes in a letter in 1976 about his own sex show *Carte Blanche*, but in a phrase applicable to his wider aesthetic, "the wit and beauty are pointless." And flesh was, in his appreciation of performances, essentially without gender. His vast admiration for Laurence Olivier's acting had a frankly erotic aspect: in his essay on Olivier in *Profiles*, a splendid collection of his longer journalistic pieces, he compares his hero's relationship to an audience to that of "a skilled but dominating lover." He found Olivier "seductive" on stage. And even in this most macho of actors, Tynan detected a certain femininity; he quotes with approval Elia Kazan's description of Olivier as "girlish."

In Louise Brooks, he responded similarly to the ambiguous sexuality of a "shameless urchin tomboy." He liked Marlene Dietrich because "she has sex but no particular gender.... Dietrich's masculinity appeals to women and her sexuality to men." Even in the burly comedian Sid Field he detected an "effeminate emphasis" and "a certain girlishness." What matters is not whether these descriptions are in themselves objectively true. It is that the sexual openness that they indicate is at the core of Tynan's achievement as a critic: his attention to the flesh and blood of an actor on stage.

There have been better analysts of the theater, and better judges of individual plays; but no one could match Tynan's ability to recreate a performance on paper. James Agate noted of Tynan's early review of Frederick Valk and Donald Wolfit in *Othello* that "anybody reading this in a hundred years' time should know what these two actors had been like in these two great roles...." And that is what Tynan continued to do wonderfully. He was so alive to the real presence of an actor that he could translate that presence into prose of startling and enduring immediacy.



KENNETH TYNAN BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

It took him some time to realize that this was what he was doing. In a letter to a friend who disagreed with him about Valk's performance, the young Tynan writes: "Your criticism is angering and shallow. It is sarcastic-descriptive criticism, not interpretative criticism, 'Ranting—mouth-foaming—hand-waving'—that is not criticism, it is embittered and uncritical cataloguing." In fact, though, Tynan's own criticism, when he found his voice, would be sarcastic-descriptive rather than interpretative.

In his celebrated book on Broadway, *The Season*, which appeared in 1969, William Goldman tried to expose critical pretentiousness by playing a trick on his readers. He quotes from a non-existent play by Harold Pinter and a non-existent review of it by Kenneth Tynan: "Frankie, referred to twice—some think mysteriously—is not mysterious at all. He is, of course, Saint Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Franciscan order, all this clearly indicated by the fact that the Franciscans have split into three orders,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

just as the human race is split into thirds: men, women and homosexuals such as Teddy." Goldman intended the reader to be taken in by the glamour of Tynan's name, and then to be mortified by the discovery that all of this is deliberate nonsense. But for anyone who had read the real Tynan even occasionally, the ploy was far too transparent to be effective. Tynan just didn't write that kind of stuff.

Tynan believed not that the critic's job was to provide a key to the play, but that the play's job was to unlock the critic's responses. For a reader looking back on his reviews and searching for interpretations, his reviews of important premières such as *Waiting for Godot* are, in retrospect, rather disappointing. There are times, indeed, when the reader longs for some sweeping generalizations from Tynan, some big idea, some broad synthesis. But intellectual abstractions are, in his articles and his letters, exceedingly rare. The excavation of meanings is, in his best work, beside the point. His mature taste was, as he puts it in a letter in 1966 to the translator and director Robert David Macdonald, for the "precise and specific instead of vague and general."

He used the phrase by way of dismissing Peter Brook's anti-war play *US*. Brook's later memory of Tynan's attendance at the play is a good example of the latter's impatience with vague symbolism. At the end of the play, Brook had the actors freeze on stage for what must have seemed an eternity. "On the first night," Brook later recalled, "Kenneth Tynan, a dear friend but one deeply impatient with what he considered our unclear political commitments, shouted at the immobile group on stage: 'Are you waiting for us or are we waiting for you?'"

As a writer, Tynan practiced what he preached. He avoided all frozen generalities that might hold up the urgency of his responses. The nearest he came to an overarching article of faith was his notion of "high definition performance," variously elucidated in his letters as "effortless precision," "the hypnotic saving grace of high and low art alike," and "the ability, shared by great athletes, sportsmen, bullfighters and conversationalists as well as stage performers—to communicate the essence of one's talent to an audience with economy, grace, no apparent effort and absolute hard-edged clarity of outline."

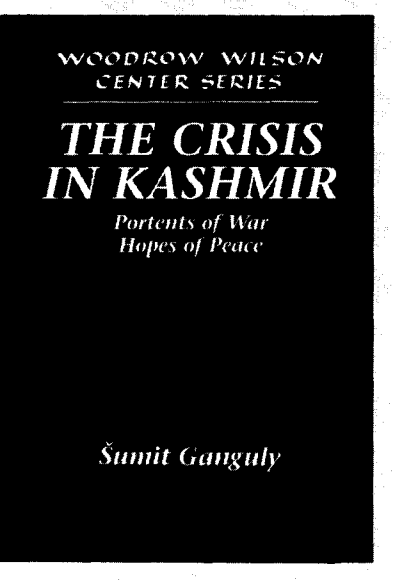
These were not so much values that he applied to individual performances, as descriptive terms that he drew from performances that he admired. As a critic Tynan was an ardent interventionist, championing writers such as Harold Pinter and John Osborne at critical moments in their careers, and engaging in fierce controversies with writers such as Eugene Ionesco and Robert Bolt. But there is, in his letters, a feeling that his personal influence on the theater mattered less to him than the theater's influence on himself.

Without it, Tynan might well have been nothing more than an overgrown *enfant terrible*. His early letters are tedious, but you have to read them to get the full meaning of what follows. Once you have got the point that he was a teenage phenomenon, astoundingly intelligent and well-read for his age, Tynan becomes for a while almost unbearable, a show-off, a self-delighted solipsist. (In a letter from 1979, he describes himself as "an outrageous exhibitionist at school.")

There is something almost creepy about the young Tynan's lack of engagement with the world around him. His working-class Irish mother is hardly mentioned. Neither is the well-to-do merchant with whom she lived—Sir Peter Peacock, Tynan's father, who also had a wife and five other children. Given the sharp awareness of class distinctions and the prejudices against illegitimacy in England in the 1930s and 1940s, it is easy to guess the source of these evasions. But their effects—an apparent lack of interest in the city and of Birmingham, where he grew up, a seeming determination to rise without trace toward the privileged towers of Oxford University, untouched by the awkward realities of a wider England—are rather unattractive.

The drama of Tynan's letters, though, is the gradual transformation of a clever, precious aesthete into a generous, engaged, and, in his own way, deeply serious character. Theater mattered so much to him because it was the arena in which that metamorphosis occurred. It was the place where the world first came home to him, where his defenses were down and his self-satisfaction was most at risk. It was what he needed—a halfway house between the private and the public, where sex and fantasy met politics and reality.

What Tynan later aimed to do to the audience of his erotic revue *Oh! Calcutta*—"confronting them . . . with *private* areas of experience—sexual realities—in a *public* place—a theatre"—is what happened to himself as a young man. Somehow, through his passionate involvement with the theater as an actor, a director, and a critic, he was forced to change himself. The youth who wrote to James Agate that "I do not believe in sincerity or profundity. I believe in superficiality. I believe in shallowness" turned



Available in bookstores or from

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

40 West 20th Street,
New York, NY 10011-4211.
Call toll-free 800-872-7423.
Web site: http://www.cup.org
MasterCard/VISA accepted.
Prices subject to change.

The Crisis in Kashmir

Portents of War, Hopes of Peace

Šumit Ganguly

"This volume represents social science at its best. It is a detailed case study of the Kashmiri insurgency... based on extensive interviews with government officials, Kashmiri activists, journalists, and military personnel..."

— **Foreign Affairs**

Woodrow Wilson Center Press Series

2 line diagrams / 2 maps
0-521-59066-3
Hardback $52.95

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

himself into the passionate advocate of the theater as "a public forum where history, art and morality are brought into one focus."

The great sorrow of these letters is that they suggest how extraordinary the outcome might have been if Tynan himself had been given full charge of a great public theater. He spent ten years, from 1963 to 1973, working under Laurence Oliver as the literary manager and the literary consultant of the National Theatre in London, trying to make it, as he wrote in a 1967 memo to Olivier, "an independent force at the heart of a country's life." The letters that he wrote in that capacity show a brilliant combination of moral courage, artistic understanding, and vulgar showmanship. Reading them, the common perception that Tynan's time at the National was an unfortunate diversion of energies is replaced by the terrible realization that everything else was a diversion from what he should have been allowed to do, which is run the place. The vague sense of waste that surrounds Tynan's later career misses something that emerges with great force from the letters: that the failure was not his, it was England's.

Of course, Tynan himself went up the blind alley of commercial erotica with *Oh! Calcutta* and *Carte Blanche*, cheerfully following the mirage of liberation through fornication. The absurd waste of talent evident in Tynan's letters on *Oh! Calcutta* is at once hilarious and awful. Bathos doesn't get much deeper than one of the most acute minds of his generation instructing the show's New York producers that in the line "lay your pecker on the table," the "stress should be on 'table' rather than 'pecker,' " or that "Nancy was a little too reticent last night in the rectal spread department."

And there is worse. Tynan's interest in sadomasochist images of bound and gagged women, reflected in one of his own sketches for *Oh! Calcutta*, does not sit easily with the rhetoric of freedom with which he surrounded his sex shows. The best that can be said is that only a great cultural optimist such as Tynan could have seriously believed that the forced marriage of William Reich's theories of sexual revolution to Broadway's showbiz marketplace would produce an offspring vigorous enough to startle the bourgeoisie. Yet *Oh! Calcutta* was also the product of Tynan's justified frustration at the obtuseness of the British apparatchiks who ultimately set the limits for what he could achieve at the National. It was Tynan's bad luck that he had to operate in a society that tantalized him with the appearance of openness while remaining, at heart, coldly reactionary.

England in the 1960s was, on the surface, the Beatles and Swingin' London, and the mini-skirt. Its popular culture was extraordinarily vigorous. Liberal reforms were being enacted. Even the royal family was anxious to appear modern, with-it, hip. At one level, Tynan's position near the top of an important national institution exemplified all of this. He was smart, cosmopolitan, and trendy. He was deeply interested in television. He shared the period's silly belief that sexual liberation and social revolution were essentially the same thing. He formed a decorous bridge between the classical culture of Laurence Olivier and the pop sensibility of the period. He was a cultural democrat who loved Lennon and McCartney as much he loved Shakespeare and Marlowe. Had he been content merely to be a gadfly, to swan around as The Man Who Said "Fuck" On Television (as he did in November 1965, in a discussion on censorship), he would have been assured of a secure place as the establishment's pet provocateur.

Yet Tynan was actually a deeply serious man. His socialist convictions were real, and his letters should destroy forever the image of Tynan as a dilettante. They show the rigorous discipline with which he fought some of his more important battles of ideas. His correspondence in relation to *In Cold Blood*, to choose perhaps the most extraordinary example, is marked by a fierce intellectual and moral determination.

Tynan reviewed Truman Capote's book when it appeared in England in 1966. He accused the writer, in effect, of failing to help Perry Smith and Richard Hancock, the killers who are the protagonists of his book, to prove their insanity and thus to avoid the death penalty. He suggested that Capote failed to act because, if the men remained alive, he could not have included vivid details of their crimes and their sexual perversities without fear of a libel action.

For Tynan, the issue had a crucial bearing on something that deeply concerned him: the duties that art owes to life and that writers have to their subjects. As he put it in his review, "where lives are threatened, observers and recorders who shrink from participation may be said to betray their species: no piece of prose, however deathless, is worth a human life." For an observer and a recorder who had recently become a participant by taking the job at the National, this was as much a personal credo as an abstract principle. Tynan's letters on the subject are underpinned by formidable research into British and American case law on the admissibility of psychiatric evidence and into the trial of Smith and Hancock. They read not as the outpourings of a professional controversialist, but as the work of someone who cares deeply about the fate of two distant, disturbed people.

He brought the same kind of rigorous passion to his work in the National Theatre. It was most obvious in his central role in the arguments over Rolf Hochhuth's play *Soldiers*, which dealt with the morality of bombing German civilians during the Second World War. Tynan saw the play as a test-case for the freedom of a public theater to explore public myths—in this case, the venerated figure of Winston Churchill. Again, Tynan worked extremely hard to ground his arguments for the play in a mastery of the relevant details of incidents in the war. But to no avail. The National's board, headed by Lord Chandos, a member of Churchill's war cabinet, unanimously voted to reject it.

Tynan considered resignation. He wrote to William Shawn before that crucial board meeting that "if they decide against it, I shall very probably resign." In retrospect, he should have done so. Instead, he wrote to *The Times*, attacking Chandos for perpetuating "the patronising myth that men of the theater are unqualified to make responsible judgements on matters of serious consequence." The main effect of this was to strengthen the determination of the establishment figures who made up the theatre's board to bring Tynan to heel.

This they did in 1969, when he applied for six months' leave-of-absence. It was granted on condition that on his return Tynan accept the downgraded position of literary consultant. At the same time, Derek Granger was brought in to the theater and given precisely the same title, making it clear that Tynan was being kept on merely as an indulgence for Olivier. The pity of it is that the National mattered so much to Tynan that he accepted these humiliations and stayed on for another three years. Eventually, when Olivier was replaced by Peter Hall, Tynan had to beg for the severance pay to which he was entitled.

The wonder, indeed, is not that Tynan achieved less in the seven remaining years of his life than he might have done. A sense of underachievement certainly does cling to his later years, and his letters are stained with spilt hope: the movie that he never made, the autobiography that he never wrote, the book on the National that he planned but did not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bring to fruition, the biography of Wilhelm Reich of which, in spite of a great deal of hard work, he wrote only the first half. No, the true marvel is that, after the slow despair of the National and under the increasingly heavy burden of an incurable lung disease, Tynan managed to write his exuberant, elegant, and thoughtful pieces on Louise Brooks, Nicol Williamson, and Ralph Richardson. Those essays are arguably the best efforts of this century to pick up with words the quicksilver of an evanescent personality. And so, for all the sadness of the later pages of Kenneth Tynan's letters, there is at least the satisfaction of knowing that, in bringing them together with such dignity, Kathleen Tynan managed, before her own death, to do the same for him.

FINTAN O'TOOLE is drama critic of the New York *Daily News*. His book, *A Traitor's Kiss: The Life of Richard Brinsley Sheridan* will be published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux in the fall.

Persecution and the Art of Painting

BY LEE SIEGEL

Socialist Realist Painting by Matthew Cullerne Bown

(Yale University Press, 506 pp., $75)

I.

The stage villain in Clement Greenberg's most famous essay, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," is the nineteenth-century Russian painter Ilya Repin. Greenberg picked up his aversion from Dwight Macdonald, who had referred to Repin in an article on Soviet cinema, as the "leading exponent of Russian academic kitsch in painting." Declaring Soviet socialist realism the supreme example of kitsch, Greenberg found it precociously embodied in Repin's work.

Take a Repin painting of a battlefield, Greenberg proposed. You will see why peasants cannot get enough of this artist's easy satisfactions, as opposed to, say, Picasso's formal abstrusities. Repin's painting simply mirrors what the peasant finds in the physical world around him. "There is no discontinuity between art and life"; and also Repin trickily and banally "heightens reality and makes it dramatic: sunset, exploding shells, running and falling men." In such a way, "Repin predigests art for the spectator and spares him effort, provides him with a short cut to the pleasure of art that detours what is necessarily difficult in genuine art. Repin, or kitsch, is synthetic art."

Whatever the lasting merits of Greenberg's essay, about one thing he was indisputably wrong. Repin never painted a battle scene in his life. And Greenberg had never seen a Repin. (He confessed to his ignorance in a footnote that he added to "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" when he reprinted it twenty-two years later in *Art and Culture*; but in his *Collected Essays*, which appeared in 1986, the footnote has been dropped.) Greenberg's aesthetic was still muffled in the chrysalis of his politics. In fact, Repin is one of the greatest painters who ever lived. His best work, his *unheimlich* portraits and dynamically psychologized crowd scenes, easily surpasses this country's Ashcan School, as well as Sargent and Homer. His portraits are the equal of Eakins's late masterpieces. But then, socialist realism, Repin's supposed legacy, numbers among its mediocrities some of the finest realist paintings produced in this century, and a bounty of masterpieces.

It is not a coincidence that Greenberg had a battle in mind when he fabricated a painting for Repin. The vast bloodbath of the communist genocide in Russia threw giant obscuring shadows over the life that kept unfolding even in the midst of the suffering. This is history's *trompe l'oeil*: with the passage of time, terrible events eclipse what they do not destroy. In the case of Russian art, socialist realism has disappeared into the darkness of its heyday. To a large extent, it earned its oblivion; but the qualities that it shared with nineteenth-century Russian realism have whisked the earlier period into oblivion with it.

There cannot be more than a handful of nineteenth-century Russian realist works owned by public collections in this country, if there are any at all. You almost certainly didn't read about them in high school or college; and certainly not in Linda Nochlin's *Realism*, one of the most illuminating commentaries on the style in nineteenth-century European painting, which doesn't mention a single Russian realist painter. Neither do the textbooks: Marilyn Stokstad's *Art History* gives just one tiny paragraph to the history of Russian realist painting and one tiny paragraph to Repin, the only Russian realist referred to at all.

Stokstad does not spend much time looking, either. Repin's portrait of Moussorgsky, she writes, shows the latter "with tousled hair and a rugged demeanor, a man of the people rather than a slick sophisticate in the Western mold." Repin was indeed, like Moussorgsky, a part of the nationalist trend sweeping Russian culture at the time; but Repin's portrait of his friend is not about anything so trite and typical as Moussorgsky's ties to the collective Russian soul. Painted rapidly in a ward for alcoholics a day before the composer's death, the work catches the once-prosperous Moussorgsky at the end of a long binge, impoverished, at the brink of madness, his eyes red and shadowed and swollen, his final energy seeming to consist of its dissipation. This, rugged?

Stokstad's description ironically resembles the politically correct introduction to a catalogue raisonné of Repin's work that appeared in the Soviet Union before communism's collapse: "Repin ... put his genius at the service of the people." Stokstad misunderstands Repin for the same reason that other scholars remain indifferent to him: they all lump him in with the socialist realists. As a result, few people know that in Russia, under the knout of terrible events and beneath the crippling lashes of official culture, artists ate, went for walks, and became new Old Masters.

Still, the instinct to make Russian nineteenth-century realism complicit with twentieth-century socialist realism is far from inaccurate. For socialist realism was not just a phenomenon of socialism. It arose as much out of the traditions of Russian culture as out of communist impositions. It was virtually inevitable that a realism with moral import became the dominant artistic style in Russian painting in the twentieth century.

Art in Russia had always been led by its officially subordinate nose: by the church, or the tsar, or the state-sponsored academy. For this reason, painters working in the icon tradition retained a medieval style well into the days of Leonardo and Michelangelo. Russian painters did not even begin to paint in oils until the eighteenth century. Just

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as communist commissars inveighed against abstraction, censors in the Russian church at the time of the Renaissance in the West railed against any hint of realistic depiction. Russian avant-garde absolutism (think of Kandinsky's manifesto *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*) may eventually have been anathematized by Soviet cultural custodians; but it grew out of a deeply embedded authoritarian strain in Russian life, which in fact had nourished and protected great icon painters such as Feofan Grek and Andrei Rublev just as much as it stifled many of their successors.

And even more consequential than the direction of art from above was the absence of direction from below. The Enlightenment that evolved in the West was imported and distributed by Catherine in Russia. Russian art lacked a Kant, a Diderot, a Shaftesbury; and it also lacked a solidly established bourgeois culture that might absorb such ideas. When Kant argued for art as an autonomous realm outside society and politics, he provided the philosophical foundation for two centuries of romantic and avant-garde art. (He also established the foundation for modern conservative taste, as the bourgeoisie metamorphosed from the revolutionary class to the ruling class to the beleaguered class.) In Russia, the reverse situation prevailed. Beginning in the nineteenth century, Russian artists and writers located art's autonomy precisely in its engagement with society and politics, in opposition to the censor's huge and clumsy hand.

So an intriguing situation came about in European art. In Western Europe, the socially (and obliquely) critical realism of Courbet and Millet was giving way by the late 1860s to Impressionism's formal experiments. At the same time, art in Russia was defining its modernity by the intensity of its social criticism. The artists working in this style were known as the *Peredezhniki*, or the Itinerants, for their practice of organizing exhibitions that traveled around Russia. They were their country's first homegrown art movement; and they were the first Russian artists to break with state-sanctioned styles. Rebelling against the lifeless Frenchified academy, these St. Petersburg painters took their inspiration from the literary critic Vissarion Belinsky and the social critic and novelist Nikolai Chernyshevsky. Both men believed that art should be, in Chernyshevsky's words, a "textbook of life," though Chernyshevsky was the more radical materialist, lamenting that "until now our art has been unable to create anything equivalent even to an orange or an apple."

Socialist realism, as Matthew Cullerne Bown observes in his poised and groundbreaking study, starts here, with Belinsky's and Chernyshevsky's insistence on art's social and political obligations. For the most part, these ideas ruled Russian art until the collapse of the Soviet system, though they were gradually twisted by the law of unintended consequences. A socially critical art hostile to the official culture became assimilated as an official style hostile to genuine social criticism. The fates are never kind with the avant-garde.

And the Itinerants were indeed the advanced artists of their day. They proved highly receptive to Belinsky and Chernyshevsky—as did Dostoevsky and Tolstoy—and even to the extreme notions of Dmitri Pisarev, who rejected wholesale the concepts of beauty and taste, and thought that the random shape of jelly was on a par with the greatest architecture. (This was fifty years before Duchamp's fanatical quotidianism.) Thus Ivan Kramskoi, the driving force behind the Itinerant movement, wrote to Repin from Paris in 1873—where he almost certainly would have seen work by Courbet, Manet, Degas, and possibly Monet—to express his anxiety that Russian painters were succumbing to mere formal principles. "We must move without fail towards light, color and air, but ... how should we proceed, if we are not to lose on the way an artist's most treasured quality—his heart?" Content should always be exalted above form, he warned. "For better or worse, we are not Frenchmen. This should never be forgotten."

Like the French realists and proto-impressionists, Russian realists were shunning academic art's classical, mythological, and Biblical themes for contemporary and everyday subjects. But they were also rejecting the Western way in which the revolution in content was yielding to a revolution in form. And, surprising though it may sound, their emphasis on subject matter put them one step ahead of the French.

We like to think of innovation, especially in the visual arts, in formal terms, with the history of Western art told as a tale of progressive abstraction, of inexorable reduction to the artistic medium itself. In this sense, Kramskoi's reference to the heart hints at a significant counter-statement. Interestingly, the words "heart" and "soul" appear over and over again in the discourse of socialist realism, most notoriously in Stalin's infamous comment that writers should be the "engineers of human souls." It is an odd vocabulary to appear in a culture and a society based on a draconian materialist ethic; but it has the effect of exposing the radical subjectivity at the core of communist thinking, and it explains how the regime's fears of formalism's self-enclosure enabled it to objectify and to anathematize its own nature. In Russian history, invocations of "heart" and "soul" have often justified a tragic deformation of rational thinking.

But there is another tradition in Russia, exemplified especially by the late Tolstoy, in which the heart has its reasons that reason cannot know. By reminding his peers to retain the incurably human element in artistic creation, Kramskoi was not celebrating irrationality. He was honoring wisdom. A wisdom of the image—the indispensable tool of the iconist's trade—is Russian realism's most daring innovation. That quality is what Bown is getting at when he writes about how socialist realist artists kept smuggling into the tinny, dishonest official "humanism" genuine humanistic elements from the bottomless stores of Russian culture.

Such a tendency began with the Itinerants, who sifted a real newness of content out of Chernyshevsky's mistrust of art and out of Pisarev's crudeness. You can see this if you compare Kramskoi's *Christ in the Wilderness*, painted in 1872, with Manet's *The Dead Christ with Angels*, painted in 1864. Both paintings rattled their respective cultures for the manner in which they stripped Jesus of transcendence, the way they set divinity down in the context of the mundane. But Manet's wonderful painting achieves its power principally by means of formal effects: the harsh frontal lighting, and the way Manet clips the angels' wings by abruptly cropping the canvas, and the modernist manner in which he drives the composition up to the picture plane, so that you never really lose the sense of looking at a painting. What a difference a few thousand miles make! Kramskoi's picture is the "window" onto reality that traditional painting had been since the Renaissance. The foregrounded stonescape upon which Jesus is seated looks as if it could have come out of Taddeo Gaddi.

Compositionally, Kramskoi is several centuries behind Manet. Kramskoi's innovation lies, rather, in his depiction of the face and the hands of Jesus. Here is how Pisarev advised artists to represent the face, which is the spiritual vanishing point of figurative (and much semi-abstract) Russian art:

> When we see from a person's face that he is healthy, intelligent and has lived through a lot in his time, then his face pleases us, not as a pretty picture, but as the program of our future relations with this person. Judg-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing by his face, we are inclined to get closer to this person, because his face tells us what the most impeccable Greek profile could not.

This philistinism later shaped a good part of socialist realist doctrine. (Bown overzealously calls this depressing passage "a powerful call to life and for an art to reflect it.") Yet Kramskoi modulated Pisarev in the same way that some socialist realist painters inflected the commissars' strictures.

He may be sitting in a boundless rocky wilderness, but Kramskoi's Jesus has the demeanor of a modern, urban man. Anomie enshrouds him. No supernatural phenomena appear around this Christ; his temptations come from within, and they take the form of familiar anguish and doubt. He is clasping his hands tightly between his knees, like a humble petitioner in a bureaucratic waiting room. He is looking down into this world, not through or beyond it. Appearing in shadow just under the hem of his robe, his bare feet make him the helpless object of compassion—or perhaps of a passerby's briefly engaged glance—rather than its source. He could be sitting crisis-ridden in a St. Petersburg park.

This is hardly the kind of programmatic reassurance that Pisarev had in mind for art. Yet neither does a viewer need to know about superseded aesthetic forms fully to comprehend the painting, which is what Manet's *Dead Christ with Angels* demands. What Kramskoi requires is an intuitive leap into what his painting knows of forms of thinking, feeling, and living. The painting leads you along an invisible line of experience clarified by the imagination, as a Renaissance painting leads your eye along receding lines of motion organized by perspective. Like the best Russian realist paintings, *Christ in the Wilderness* is as "necessarily difficult" as Greenberg's formalism. It is wisdom painting.

II.

Kramskoi is at the magnificent core of Russian realism. You have to experience that style in order to grasp the value of much socialist realist painting. That is why Bown begins his study with a survey of the earlier period. You must see the work of Isaac Levitan, a Jew whose landscapes gave nationalist Russia its self-image, and whose caressing brushstrokes make the world look like eternity's flushed or shivering skin; or the paintings of Vasily Vereshchagin, who painted some of the most remarkable scenes of war in the history of art. (His *Fatally Wounded* approaches *The Dying Gaul* in its unsettling mystery.) And there are many more extraordinary Russian realist painters: Aleksander Ivanov, Nicholas Ge, Boris Shishkin, Vasily Surikov, Nikolai Yaroshenko, Aleksei Savrasov, to name a few. Repin is nonpareil. His *Religious Procession in the Kursk Province* and *Ivan the Terrible and His Son Ivan* (depicting the former's impulsive murder of the latter) make Courbet look meek.

There is nothing in other nineteenth-century realist traditions that comes close to the ontological complexity of Russian realist paintings. They enfold you in sheer inarticulable being. If the best of them share a common quality, it is the way they use the vexed heaviness of flesh, and the separate life of things, to demonstrate the vexed career of the spirit. They fling the soul like meat to the heart. In our cultural moment, when so much art lies supine on the cushions of irony and banality, an exhibition here of Russian realist painting might have the same invigorating effect on an enfeebled American postmodernism that the Armory Show once had on a nascent American modernism.

Socialist realism tried to turn the Itinerants' realism on its head, but that project never entirely succeeded. The doctrine behind socialist realism was so muddled and fluid that in 1987 one prominent Soviet art historian admitted that the term itself should be abandoned since "we do not know what socialist realism is." That was over fifty years after socialist realism had been declared the official style. In fact, as Bown fascinatingly shows, from the time of the revolution until the disintegration of the Soviet system, the question of what a Soviet-style art should be frequently gave rise to the kind of polemic that we associate with aesthetic debate in the West. And such contention appeared in official publications.

To be sure, the arguments took place within definite parameters, especially at the height of Stalinist repression in the 1930s. Bown reprints a discussion of a portrait of Voroshilov, the Red Army commander, conducted between Sergei Gerasimov, one of the most powerful art-world commissars under Stalin, and three of his colleagues:

> Gerasimov: Out of the intelligent, remarkable face of Voroshilov the author has made some kind of an idiot. This is a counter-revolutionary work.
>
> E. Lvov: I consider that the portrait needs to be corrected, it has not been done on purpose. However, it is necessary to take into account that when the jury was shown this work they all burst out laughing. Consequently, the work is counter-revolutionary.
>
> Yu. Slavinski: So ... reject it with harsh criticism.
>
> E. Katsman: It is necessary to suggest that this thing is destroyed, not only not accepted.

Such "evaluations" must have paralyzed countless imaginations, and not only under Stalin. More chilling was the case of a painter named Nikolai Mikhailov. In 1935, the entire fifty-member board of the all-powerful Union of Soviet Artists (MOSSKh) met to accuse Mikhailov of using a painting to incite the assassinations of Voroshilov and Stalin. The work in question was *Farewell to Comrade Kirov*, done by Mikhailov just after the murder in December, 1934 of the Leningrad party-boss. The artist depicted Stalin and Voroshilov standing over Kirov's coffin, paying their respects. MOSSKh officials liked the painting so much that they hung it in their headquarters. But when a photographer snapped a picture of Mikhailov's canvas that appeared in a Soviet newspaper, the photograph seemed to the commissars to show a skeleton—a kind of skull-and-cross-bones, from their description—grabbing Stalin by the arm and Voroshilov by the neck. Hastily accused by the terrified union leaders of both counter-revolutionary activity and sketchy, impressionistic technique, Mikhailov got ten years and was probably executed. If proof were still needed that Kirov was killed on Stalin's orders, the commissars' fevers of Raskolnikovian paranoia would be enough.

Stalin persecuted artists, but not nearly on the scale that he hunted down writers. In fact, he appointed the artists themselves, among others, as the custodians of aesthetic policy. A different situation prevailed in fascist Italy, where Mussolini never drew up an official line for artists to follow, and in Nazi Germany, where the state simply imposed one. One reason for Stalin's relative leniency might have been that he was a failed poet, not a failed artist. (Exhibitions of "degenerate" art did not hold the interest for him that they did for Hitler, the unremarkable watercolorist.) And with his withered arm, below-average height, and pock-marked face, he might have felt beholden to those responsible for his public makeover.

Perhaps because his own appearance terrified him, Stalin had a visceral respect for appearance in general, and for those who created it. And though he reduced with one swipe of the pen the number of art organizations in his kingdom, he probably enjoyed allowing room for the polarizing squabbles that had characterized the Russian

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

art world from before the revolution. As people involved in the state's massive propaganda activities, artists performed a manipulative function that served the state's purposes. Regarding artists as, in some degree, public servants, Stalin might have felt that mutual suspicion, rather than outright terror, was the best way to enforce their obedience. (It was for this reason that he encouraged competition among the various factions of the secret police.)

The result was the institutionalization of an art-world of self-advancing maneuvers and professional turf wars that continued to foster at least some of the stylistic variety that had existed in Soviet art since October 1917. For pluralism is not too bold a term to describe much of the configuration of official art between the revolution and Stalin's consolidation of power. From the storming of the Winter Palace, and through the limited free-market period of the NEP in the 1920s, the artistic styles vying for absolute authority made Paris during the same period look like a quiet and rather academic salon.

Though still active at the time of the revolution, the Itinerants had conceded their advanced position to coteries that made highly stylized yet mostly figurative art: the World of Art, Jack of Diamonds, Union of Youth, and the Moscow "Cézannists." The latter were themselves superseded by more formally radical—and more abstract—cliques such as rayonnists, symbolists, cubists, cubo-futurists, constructivists, and primitivists. It was the constructivists who emerged ascendant. They are the group to whom people refer when they talk about the Russian avant-garde, also known as the futurists.

The constructivists composed the extreme left-wing of the art world, and they were opposed mainly by Malevich's suprematists. The latter had embraced the revolution, but they bridled at its subjugation of the artist to the state. The suprematists were also unmoved by the constructivists' theories about marrying the artist and the industrial designer. In 1918, Malevich painted *White on White* as a spiritual challenge to the constructivists' scorn for easel- painting and their exaltation of the machine. In a parodic blow for materialism, Rodchenko, an arch-constructivist, retorted with a painting entitled *Black on Black*. There is a metaphor here for revolutionary situations.

But the suprematists were no match for the way the constructivists bullied and elbowed their way into the revolution's highest political echelons. After the Bolshevik coup, the constructivists briefly ruled the roost by means of political-cultural organs, especially through the establishment across the country of countless "proletarian culture organizations," known as proletkults. "The Streets are our Brushes," they announced, "the Squares are our Palettes." They looked forward to painting all the buildings in Moscow gray, and the windows black. They insisted, in the words of a sympathetic critic, that "communism, as a theory of culture, cannot exist without futurism."

As they saw it, their politics did not lie in their artistic style, which was, for the most part, abstract. Instead they defined their revolutionary commitment in terms of a totalizing method of production: collaboration with workers; collective creation; the decoration of streets and public buildings; an art that would aim at creating a New Person and a New Society, after which art itself would disappear into industry, engineering, and communications and wither away like the state. And this utopian aesthetic outraged Lenin's utopian politics.

Lenin did not exactly pore over aesthetic problems. His criterion for art was a simple one. As he told a group of art students during a surprise midnight visit to their hostel, art should be "comprehensible to a worker and to everyone else." Lenin rejected the constructivists' avant-garde vision of the artist-worker. In doing so, he was asserting the bourgeois notion of a distinction between the artist and the non-artist. Such a notion sorted better with the way in which Lenin conceived of the gulf between the political avant-garde and the mass of citizens.

Anyway, Lenin had a deeper reason for his aesthetic caution. As he told Gorky, after confessing to a fondness for Beethoven's *Appassionata*, "I can't listen to music often, it acts on my nerves, I want to say sweet nothings and caress the heads of people who, living in a dirty hell, can create such beauty. But today it's not possible to caress anyone's head—they'll bite your hand off, and it's necessary to crack skulls, crack them mercilessly, although ideally we are against any kind of violence on people." Did the professional revolutionary have a primal fear of the vicissitudes of the heart? That would explain a lot about the trajectory of revolutions. Or was Lenin dead to Beethoven and to art in general, and just bullying an artistically superior hero of the revolution with his moral superiority while showing that he was as aesthetically sensitive as Gorky himself?

By 1919, Lenin had halted the constructivists' snapping advance and put brakes on the proletkults. (Though they had the last word: the most famous constructivist public structure left in Russia is Lenin's tomb.) This was partly owed to the increasing influence of the proletkults, which were being sponsored by Lunacharsky, Lenin's commissar of Enlightenment and a possible rival. But the explanation goes deeper. A utopian politics gazing at a utopian art sees the lethal skull-and-cross-bones of its own ego. And there was a practical consideration, too. An abstract politics needs the ballast, in the cultural realm, of recognizable images.

By the mid-twenties, the proletkults were just about defunct. The resilient Lunacharsky began promulgating easel-painting and realist style. Thus the Soviet art world became broadly and momentarily divided between two figurative groups: the more formally experimental OSt (Society of Easel Painters) and the more traditional AKhRR (The Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia). The AKhRR had appropriated the Itinerants' style, while mostly rejecting its socially critical content, after the latter disbanded. Eventually the AKhRR won out.

Yet the notorious Soviet campaign against formalism persisted. The reason is that Russian artists, like Kramskoi, would have felt uncomfortable with a modernist absence of subject matter even without the ukases of socialist realism. The fury of antiformalism was due, moreover, to the fact that formalism never left Soviet art. As Bown meticulously shows, complaints about bourgeois subjectivist experimentation with form led to a "documentary" approach in reaction, which led to dissatisfaction with mere naturalistic "copying," which produced more formalist forays, which provoked a crude conservative response, and so on. The futurists left the scene by 1930, but their restless utopian energy kept animating the debate over what kind of art would replace their utopian vision.

Here are some of the official art organizations and semi-official groups that strove to establish their aesthetic between October 1917 and Stalin's radical streamlining in 1932 (the abbreviations themselves are futurist verbal designs, a new language of revolution): AKhRR; AKhR; NarKomPros; OSt; FOSKh; Oktyabr; VOPrA; the Four Arts; OMKh; RAPKh; OSSO; IzoBrigada; Bytie; Rost; OKhO; OKhS; LORKh; TRaM; OMAKhR. Much of this ferment reflected the economic pluralism of Lenin's New Economic Policy. And

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

much of it was due to the period of "class struggle," during which the regime massacred a recalcitrant peasantry.

With that accomplished, a single decree in April 1932 abolished all art-world sects and factions. In June 1932, Stalin created the Union of Soviet Artists (MOSSKh) to replace them. And in 1934, Gorky, Bukharin, and Zhdanov, Stalin's Minister of Culture, set down the three chief criteria of socialist realism, though these principles had been knocking around for years: *ideinost*, ideological consistency; *partinost*, party spirit; and *narodnost*, commitment to representing the life of the Soviet people.

Like Lenin, Stalin showed little interest in aesthetics. He liked Repin's *Zaporozhe Cossacks Writing a Letter to the Turkish Sultan*, and probably had a copy of it hanging in his bedroom. (Maybe Greenberg and Macdonald got wind of that and thus felt no twinge of conscience in dismissing Repin without having seen his work.) Isaac Brodsky, Stalin's court painter, and a fairly gifted artist, said that Stalin's highest praise for a painting was that it contained "living people." Lackey critics and union officials from the worlds of art and literature repeated that phrase throughout the period of the purges. Stalin's flair for obliterating irony—a little like the sculptures depicting mythological punishments that Louis XIV placed in the gardens of Versailles to deflate his courtiers—makes you wonder how he meant "living people" to be taken. He himself refused to pose for any of his myriad portraits. The famous sculptor Vera Mukhina wriggled out of pressure to depict Stalin by insisting that she could work only "from life."

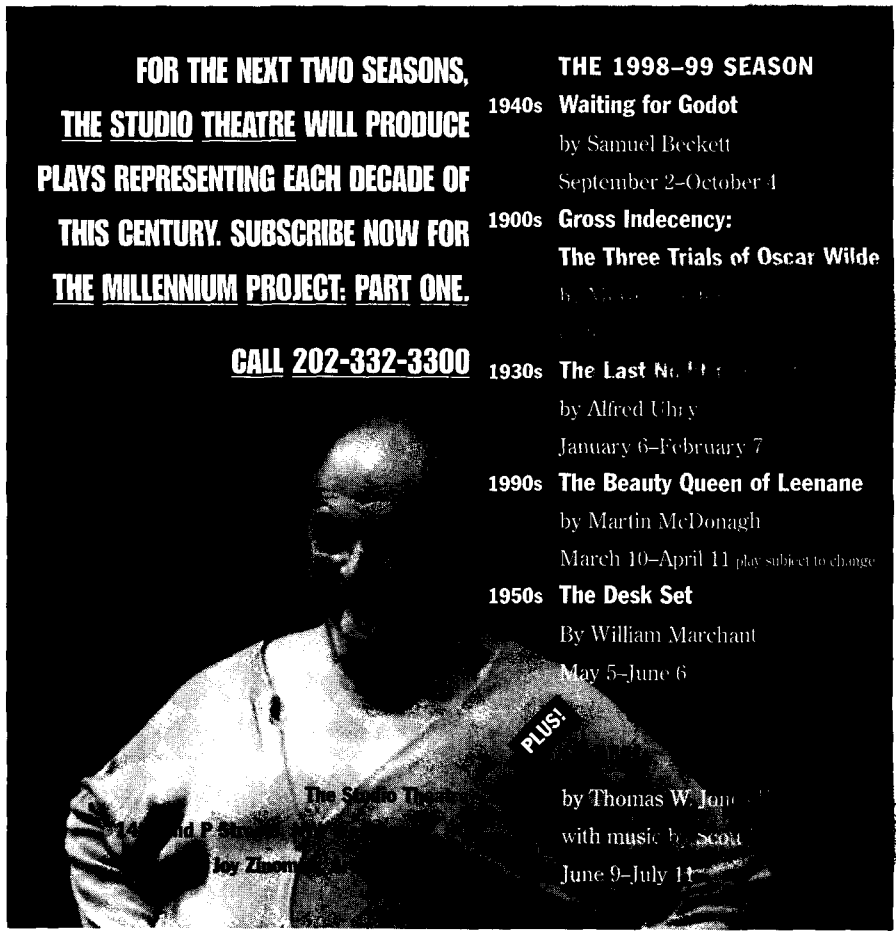
Stalin loved movies, especially action movies, and it is not clear if he, or his commissars, had any more of an "eye" for painting than your average television critic. The official response to Samuil Adlivankin's *A Visit to the Tank Drivers* provides a fine illustration of their ocular lassitude. The painting depicted a crowd of soldiers holding aloft a baby with an oversized tank-driver's hat on its head. According to an eyewitness, Stalin went up to it at the Red Army show in 1933, with Voroshilov, Molotov, and Ordzhonikidze, the head of heavy industry. They laughed, and Ordzhonikidze said to Stalin, "This is our kind of picture." Though it exists now only in reproduction, the painting is in fact skillful and even enigmatic. The child's mother and the soldiers are smiling, but the child itself is not. Its eyes are hidden completely in shadow. The picture possesses an intriguing trace of self-reflection.

"Can the victorious results of the heroic struggle to build socialism, the joy of our happy flourishing life, really be expressed by the familiar standard smiles, by purely external effects of color and light?" This is an excerpt from an art review that appeared in a Soviet newspaper in 1938, the peak of both the Stalinist terror and the campaign against formalism in the arts. Note the language. The sentence begins with an homage to the triumphant system, asserts the satisfaction of the people living under it, and finishes with a *de rigueur* dig at the formalist bane of technique for its own sake. And there, buried in the middle of the sentence is criticism of the "familiar standard smiles." Yet smiles were the hallmark of socialist realism's enforced optimism. Anyone who disparaged them as "familiar" and "standard" might also take a negative view of the familiar and standard rhetoric about "victorious results," "heroic struggle," "happy flourishing life," and so on. The writer could venture such a dangerous remark only because, even under Stalin, the definition of socialist realism remained in flux.

III.

Appearing for the first time in 1932, the term "socialist realism" embodied a heritage of ideological, aesthetic, and philosophical perplexity to which not even Stalin could bring order. The commissars' inability to come up with an art that conformed to their purposes was symbolic of the regime's inability entirely to master the human substance under its control. It is as if art contained its own antibodies against the anti-human element. The failure of socialist realist doctrine in the Soviet Union is, ultimately, entangled with the essential incalculableness of human reality. A science (and a politics) for representing that reality could not be found.

Since the end of the nineteenth century, Russian Marxists had tried to hatch a realist art that would be serviceable to the new society. From that time until 1932, various formulations had been proposed: heroic realism, realistic idealism, naïve realism, synthetic realism, dialectical realism, constructive realism, proletarian realism, dynamic realism, compositional realism, industrial-technical realism, political realism. And all these notions foundered on the impera-


FOR THE NEXT TWO SEASONS, THE STUDIO THEATRE WILL PRODUCE PLAYS REPRESENTING EACH DECADE OF THIS CENTURY. SUBSCRIBE NOW FOR THE MILLENNIUM PROJECT: PART ONE.
CALL 202-332-3300
THE 1998–99 SEASON
1940s Waiting for Godot
by Samuel Beckett
September 2–October 4
1900s Gross Indecency:
The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde
1930s The Last
by Alfred Uhry
January 6–February 7
1990s The Beauty Queen of Leenane
by Martin McDonagh
March 10–April 11 play subject to change
1950s The Desk Set
By William Marchant
May 5–June 6
PLUS!
by Thomas W.
with music
June 9–July 11

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Courtesy Yale University Press/Russian Museum, St. Petersburg

ARKADI PLASTOV, *A COLLECTIVE FARM FESTIVAL*, 1937

tive of Georgi Plekhanov, the first Russian Marxist and an admirer of Belinsky and Chernyshevsky: "Without an idea, art is impossible."

The idea, of course, was the perfectibility of society. And that was the rub. A realism guided self-consciously by an ideal was, essentially, a paradox.One result of this predicament was a search for an art that had futurist content but no futurist form. The other was a paranoid hatred of abstract art's "idealism." Both outcomes must have made the art of the futurists themselves appear repulsively redundant.

Various figures took a shot at defining revolutionary art. Lunacharsky, who liked to dabble in aesthetics, devised the notion of bio-mechanics. Taking up the baton from Plekhanov's materialism, he applied it to the human figure through the medium of human biology. Influenced by Ernst Mach's mechanistic philosophy, the commissar of Enlightenment expatiated on what the New Person in the New Society would look like: healthy and happy and physically gorgeous. The greater the concord among the body's various elements, the greater the harmony of the individual's mental state, and the closer to perfection the society. Art should induce this total balance through the way it operates on the faculties. Thus Lunacharsky promoted, as Bown puts it, "a maximum of visual excitement": visual rhythm, rousingly warm colors, and an aversion to broken or irregular forms.

One of Bown's many virtues is that, in his discussion of Lunacharsky, he debunks the Russian philosopher Boris Groys, who has had a lot of influence on the art scene in Russia today. Groys argued that Stalin took over from the futurists the concept of the state as a total work of manipulative art. Like some far less interesting pundits and commentators in this country, Groys reduced politics and history to an exotic strain of aesthetics. But Bown shows that it was not the futurists' aestheticized politics that influenced Stalin. It was Lunacharsky's politicized aesthetic that influenced the futurists, some of whom threw themselves at the commissar's feet. Behind the "society of the spectacle"—in our day, beyond even the evil geniuses of the big and the small screen—are the more significant facts of social and political relations. That was certainly Lenin's feeling

The antagonism between Lunacharsky and Lenin set the stage for the perpetual struggle between formalism and naturalism. For there were really no "realistic" criteria to guide the portrayal of a life that people could recognize *and* the projection of a communist future that people could believe in. For one prominent critic, Soviet art was realistic "but only in the sense which Comrade Trotsky gives to that term." For another, "identical attitudes are not at all identical at different historical periods and they create in different epochs their 'realistic style' differently." The commissars must have found it unnerving—or did some find it liberating?—that the element of contingency that they had suppressed in social and political life was slipping in through the back door of official art.

Socialist realist doctrine faced another problem: history itself. As the regime's fortunes changed, its art had to change with it. So the proliferation of styles during the NEP period of "class struggle" during the 1920s gave way to the lugubriously merry canvases of the 1930s. In the '30s, art had to portray the dialectical forces gestating a utopian future. But the war came, and it enabled artists to depict life's dark side, the representation of which Stalin had earlier proscribed.

And then postwar art reinstituted the official optimism through the "Theory of Conflictlessness," which held that since the classless society had been achieved, art should dispense with illustrating dialectical strife. Collectively produced "brigade paintings" were meant to add to the illusion of utopian harmony. With Khrushchev's rise to power, the Severe Style came to the fore: for-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mally innovative, monumental, socially engaged, harsh, disillusioned. And as the system declined into the Brezhnev era's corpulence and corruption, the attempt to impose a socialist realism from above gave way to a voluntary—and immensely creative—appropriation of it by artists from below.

Such flux reflected socialist realism's underpinning principle: "socialist in content, realist in form." And since, contrary to fashionable present-day opinion, images are more indeterminate than words will ever be, such a principle could really mean, in shrewd and gifted hands, an invitation to defiance and distortion.

This is not to say that Soviet artists didn't knock out a steady line of deceitful, mind-bruising abortions of the imagination. And it is not to say that plenty of artists, some talented, some not, willingly went along with the cultural commissars and made life miserable for more conscientious figures. Also, Bown is too dismissive of the so-called "nonconformist" artists, active from 1956 until communism's collapse, who painted outside the official boundaries. They created some striking and powerful art (though their status as dissidents has sometimes blinded critics to the large amount of second-rate work they also produced). And you feel uncomfortable when Bown brandishes Soviet artists' incomparable technical training as an argument for socialist realism's artistic merit. He has to do this to spare himself ethical contortions over all the depictions of bountiful harvests fabricated at a time of state-organized famine, and the zillion portraits of a deified Stalin done amidst the purges, and the representations of happy and robust workers produced at the zenith of forced labor.

Still, Bown is correcting seventy years of Western ignorance and neglect, so a bit of zeal is pardonable. And he is not overstating his case when he asserts that "the painting of socialist realism, broadly defined, comprises our century's outstanding movement in realist painting." By "broadly defined," I think he means a general cultural style out of whose criteria an individual can hew his or her own personal style. Van der Veyden and Van Eyck painted in the same prevailing style, but in radically idiosyncratic ways, as did Vermeer and Rembrandt, or Courbet and Manet. (It is only after impressionism that different individual styles really begin to take on the appearance of different cultures.) In socialist realism, to be sure, a particular artist's style often is unstable—a sign that the artist is either a genius or a hack; but the best socialist realist artists painted in a consistently distinctive way. And this despite the fact that, to get a commission from the union, an artist had to choose an approved title for the painting before embarking on it.

What with the vague and perpetually evolving official criteria, the conflicts between critics and artists, the official tastemakers' careerist position-taking, and the changing times, Soviet artists found a way to express themselves. After all, patrons had been handing out commissions based on exacting or unattractive subject matter since the Middle Ages. And the realist tradition was the birthright of the Soviet artists. Steeped in the older style, they found it possible to bend aesthetic instructions to their own uses. You might call their response "painting between the lines."

What they could do with crowd scenes! There is no art that ponders the modern crowd with anything like the attention of Soviet art. Consider the Ashcan School's crowds as a contrast. The American faces are generic blurs, represented mainly for the sake of atmosphere. But socialist realism uses its crowd scenes to portray the distinctness of individuals. The main influence here was Stanislavsky, who advised actors to plumb their own experience to find the emotions animating their characters. Impelled by socialist realism's calls for cinematic, participatory qualities in painting, artists used Stanislavskian technique to imagine the psychologies of the figures they were portraying.

The official imperative was to show the personal benefits of collective harmony. Superficially heeding this, painters could present visual evidence for personal autonomy. This is in the line of Repin's extraordinary *A Religious Procession in Kursk Province*, a vastly peopled picture that delineates general social suffering in each of its minutely differentiated faces. In socialist realist crowd scenes, the centuries-long attention to the face in Russian art, brought to a peak of perfection by the nineteenth-century realists, came to the artists' aid.

Thus Arkadi Plastov's *A Collective Farm Festival*, painted in 1938, portrays an outdoor banquet in a yard behind a stone building with a wooden roof. The painting hums with color and movement, and it includes the requisite smiling faces. Indeed, fluttering above the happy goings-on is a red banner sporting Stalin's grotesque motto: "Living Has Got Better, Comrades, Living Has Got Merrier." Stalin's portrait, propped up by two sticks, appears behind and above the banner, at the painting's compositional acme. The whole thing conforms to official standards. At first glance—and this was 1938, the final year of the Great Purge—it is morally repugnant. But the viewer has to look more closely, which even Bown doesn't venture doing.

For a start, the work is stunningly executed. It is also devoid of the surreal element that plagues many socialist realist works, the result of the artist's self-conscious adherence to external criteria bobbing unnervingly away from the eye along the painting's own subconscious undertow. Plastov's painting begins organically to work against itself. Faces are partially or completely hidden behind the heads of other people. A woman stands off to the side, isolated, almost scowling. Two bearded peasants speak discreetly to each other, a private island in the midst of the public celebration. What's more, these men appear directly under Stalin's picture, along an almost straight line that ends in the foreground with a woman who has her back turned to the viewer. The very top of the line is Stalin's face; and the eye follows the line down to the woman's behind. And not only does

"No matter what position you take on Islamic fundamentalism, this book is invaluable."
—Juan E. Campo, University of California, Santa Barbara

THE CHALLENGE OF FUNDAMENTALISM
Political Islam and the New World Disorder
by Bassam Tibi

"No one has offered such a bold corrective to the clash-of-civilizations rhetoric, distancing Islam from Islamic fundamentalism or Islamism and at the same time demonstrating the compatibility of Islam with an international morality that affirms tolerance, human rights and democratic structures."
—Bruce Lawrence, Duke University

$29.95 at bookstores or order 1-800-822-6657
University of California Press

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one of the bearded peasants have his arm flung around the other's shoulder; a wolf-like hound stares rapaciously at a basket of apples as a young girl reaches toward them. A Soviet viewer would have known that the mass murder of the peasantry was concluded only six years earlier.

Like Kramskoi's *Christ in the Wilderness*, Plastov's painting has knowledge; and it calls for a leap into what it knows. Its demand upon the viewer's response is as strenuous as the demand posed by any Western avant-garde work, and you find this again and again in socialist realist art. Plastov himself was criticized for showing labor as exhausting: "toil" should be the joyous hero of socialist realism, Gorky had said. Critics also reprimanded him for concealing his faces. But he remained in favor, and officials of the prestigious Surikov Institute in Moscow wrote to him, extending an invitation to teach. He demurred, explaining that staying in his village was better for his art.

The crowd could be a kind of bourgeois sanctuary for the socialist realist artist. Within its unlimited psychological space, the disclosure of meaning on a face could hide an inwardly migrating imagination. The depiction of the relationship between the individual and the crowd was politically sanctioned, after all. And in the 1920s, the deadening-sounding official call for painters to illustrate history's dialectic provoked the same creative response. The master of that decade was Alexander Deineka, who also created the ceiling mosaics for the Moscow subway's remarkable Mayakovsky Station. Showing history's dialectical mechanism required simultaneous scenes of past, present, and future; and Deineka, a modernist, used that pretext to employ temporally distinct, cubistic planes in dismayingly titled masterpieces such as *The Defense of Petrograd* (1926) and *Building New Factories* (1927).

More traditional painters used the dialectical theme in their own way. In Boris Ioganson's *In an Old Factory in the Urals*, painted in 1937, a worker stares with defiance at his opulently clad boss. Behind them toil workers plunged in darkness. As Bown observes, Ioganson has captured present, past, and future in the figures of debased proletariat, wicked overseer, and proud worker. Yet Bown tells us that the boss was modeled on Alexander Gerasimov who, with Sergei Gerasimov (no relation), was the all-powerful overseer of the art world. And his sneering assistant has the face of a prominent critic! How did this painting make it past the censor?

A visual gesture in socialist realism could be worth a thousand images. Bown doesn't say so, but you could write the history of Russian art from the nineteenth-century through the entire Soviet period by looking at the constructivists' favorite compositional device: the diagonal. One of socialist realism's cardinal criteria was that a painting had to convey the idea of forward and forward-looking motion. Thus the organization of a painting by dynamic diagonals, a trick borrowed from baroque art, appears in much socialist realist work. Probably the most famous example is Alexander Gerasimov's *Lenin on the Tribune*, from 1929. Lenin's gaze toward an unseen future beyond the picture frame on the viewer's right is underlined by a flag pointing in the same direction along an upward diagonal line. But since diagonals were also the constructivists' trademark, socialist realist artists could manipulate a proscribed formalist icon by quoting them.

In Nikolai Baskakov's *A Windy Day*, from 1961, the foregrounded figure leans almost out of the canvas, along a diagonal that indicates the prescribed positive outlook. Yet the horizon behind him is just above his ankles, tethering the forward motion to earth. Horizons during that period of revelation and liberalization generally appear lower in paintings. Twelve years earlier Dmitri Mochalski painted *After the Demonstration (They Saw Stalin)*, in which he has a young man carrying the identical flag that appeared in *Lenin on the Tribune*. This time, however, it points along a diagonal in the reverse direction. These paintings could be hinting at nothing at all. But who can say for sure? Their ambiguity is a sign of their freedom.

The erudite Bown does not venture such interpretations. Considering how diabolically wily centuries of official culture have made Russian artists and writers, he should have let himself go a little, especially in the case of Pavel Globa's *Galya of the Birds* (1950). Even in reproduction, I find this picture strangely alluring. Bown refers to its "obligatory optimism." The country girl walking in the foreground at the head of a flock of geese is indeed smiling; in accord with convention, she is looking out past the frame on the viewer's right toward an invisible future. The wind is playing around her apron and the hem of her skirt, lifting the bottom of the kerchief that she has tied around her head. But the line of geese runs along a diagonal toward the back of the painting, not the front. The geese bend forward, reaching for the girl's skirt, but they can't get to it. And you cannot tell whether the sun is setting behind a sere brown hill or rising. There is a puzzling sadness rippling through the obligatory optimism, a sense of loss irradiating a moment of hope.

The uncanny thing is that the painting's diagonals duplicate those in that *ur*-artistic-moment of social criticism, Repin's *A Religious Procession in Kursk Province*. Formally the paintings are exactly alike, right down to the two geese in the foreground stretching out their necks the way the two lame beggars in the foreground in Repin are stretching forward. So what does the reference mean? Laying a pastoral scene over Repin's could refer, I suppose, to communism's triumph over regressive social conditions. Yet the girl is gazing into an unseen future, not into a triumphant present. The future that Repin's work looked forward to was an oppressive political system's upheaval.

I do not want to make it seem like the worth of the best socialist realist paintings lies in their subterfuge. I am trying to demonstrate the subterfuge to prove that a creative breadth did exist. There are paintings reproduced in Bown's book, and many more in private and public collections in Russia, that strike the viewer for purely aesthetic reasons, for the sometimes astounding way in which they reveal the struggle to turn a socially burdened eye inward while staying true to a shared social and physical reality. That is not just a Soviet aesthetic problem.

Of the many public services Bown so intelligently performs is the revelation of Soviet art before and after Stalin. The still lifes painted by Ilya Mashkov during the '20s, to take one example among dozens, have been pushed to the side entirely by futurist art; but they are the earthy counterparts, laden with being, to Willem Kalf's seventeenth-century elegantly ethereal masterpieces. The paintings reproduced by Bown of scenes from the Second World War are alone worth the price of the book. They find their consummation in the work of Geli Korzhev, one of the founders of the Severe Style, and one of the greatest artists of the twentieth century. For my money, no American realist can touch him. Korzhev's portraits are the end of the line for the face in Russian art: his weathered, bruised, scarred, wreaked-upon figures strip history naked and expose it on the peak of a human pathos.

Manet once wrote that "The artist does not say today, 'Come and see faultless works,' but 'Come and see sincere works.'" His place in the modernist line of descent eventually pulled Manet's sin-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cerity out from under him. But many socialist realist paintings are at their most sincere when they are at their most ironic. That deeply human note is alien to us because our irony is as utilitarian as the idea of *partinost*: it is a tool for the earnest upending of earnestness. It has the form of humor without the substance of wit. So we are blind to beautiful, spiritual irony; to irony that outrages convention by discovering meaning, rather than affirming convention by merely rearranging meaning.

This is the sort of artistic truth that is buried in these paintings. And many of these works are just plain sincere about the root elements of existence. The regime's hateful and hypocritical calls for artists to show hope, endurance, and joy sometimes resulted in officially approved images of hope, endurance, and joy that served as antidotes to all the outrageous official hypocrisy. The complexity of some of these paintings is almost unfathomable, and profoundly moving. If nothing else, they prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that the regime's own artists could beat the censor and traduce the state. In an unbearably sad position in an unbearably sad place, they made some of the most accomplished and affecting art of our time. •

Complexity in Arms

BY RICHARD WHITE

Tecumseh: A Life by John Sugden

(Holt, 492 pp., $34.95)

In popular culture in America, famous Indians tend to be interchangeable. Tecumseh, Pontiac, Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, Cochise: all of them are male; all of them are brave; all of them are doomed; all of them are defeated; all of them die. In their legends as in their lands, Indians don't get to have much of a range.

American requirements for famous Indians are nearly as stable as they are narrow, but the name of the Indian in fashion does tend to change every half-century or so. Crazy Horse is the Indian of choice for the late twentieth century; but in the early nineteenth century, the Indian du jour was clearly Tecumseh. He was a Shawnee Indian who opposed American expansionism and died for his trouble. And once Americans had killed Tecumseh, they assimilated him and romanticized him.

Tecumseh became an American icon. They named towns after him in Michigan, Indiana, and Missouri. They named a mountain after him in New Hampshire. They even named their children after him, William Tecumseh Sherman being the most famous. Americans saw no irony in making a man who fell victim to their own worst qualities into a symbol of what they regarded as their best qualities: courage, self-restraint, resilience, a love of freedom, a native genius.

The admiration of Tecumseh no more changed the actual treatment of Indian peoples, of course, than it had prevented soldiers from partially skinning the dead Tecumseh to make razor straps for souvenirs. It was William Tecumseh Sherman who supervised the final conquest of the western tribes, but his parents would have seen nothing odd about that. His father had enlisted against Tecumseh. When a puzzled neighbor wondered why he named his child after a man who had been his enemy, Sherman's father supposedly replied: "Tecumseh was a great warrior."

Tecumseh *was* a great warrior. He was also a powerful orator and a skilled diplomat. Historians agree with his contemporaries on that. Bravery, eloquence, and the ability to mediate are virtues that pass across cultural boundaries: one people can honor them in another. In actual history, however, how people fight, how they speak, and how they negotiate are all at least partially culture-bound; generals, orators, and diplomats can find their skills ignored or even condemned when they are transferred to another society with different ways of fighting, speaking, and negotiating. When Americans made Tecumseh into a canonical figure of courage and patriotism, turning an enemy into an icon, they drained most of the Shawnee out of him. By the time they were through with him, Tecumseh could as easily have been Roman as Shawnee.

In his new biography of Tecumseh, John Sugden is engaged in a rescue project. He wants to rescue the historical Tecumseh from the hagiographers of the nineteenth century and from the popular biographers and novelists of the twentieth century, whom Sugden regards as their descendants. And having recovered the facts of Tecumseh's life, he wants to restore him to the Shawnees, to the wider Indian world of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These are commendable ambitions, and this is a commendable book. Sugden succeeds in telling Tecumseh's story more fully, more accurately, and more judiciously than it has ever been told before.

The paradoxical result of Sugden's rigor, however, is that we come away startled by how little we actually know about one of the most famous Indian leaders of all time. Sugden is a prodigious researcher. Over the course of thirty years, he has looked at pretty much all the sources available for Tecumseh and his family. He has made himself a master of the details, meticulously reconstructing Tecumseh's activities and relationships: where he went, whom he knew, what he did. But despite the decades of research and the nearly four hundred pages of prose, the iconic Tecumseh—the tragic and brave Indian chief—remains much as Sugden found him. Sugden adds minor faults to his great virtues, but this only makes his subject a somewhat fuller container of abstractions.

Sugden fails to transcend the iconic Tecumseh, and he fails, too, to capture the world that produced the Shawnee leader, the world that he tried to shape. In an earlier and much shorter biography of Tecumseh, E. David Edmunds insisted that Tecumseh could be understood only in tandem with his brother Tenskwatawa, known as the Shawnee Prophet; and Sugden also pairs the two. But Sugden, despite abundant ethnographic detail about the Shawnees, never creates the sense of a complex human being in a living world. Without ever directly challenging contemporary scholarship that emphasizes how mixed and intertwined whites and Indians had become in the Great Lakes and Ohio River country, Sugden reverts back to an older conception of a clash of cultures still very strong in popular thought. In his way, Sugden panders to contemporary conventions of identity nearly as fully as did the nineteenth-century writers whom he condemns.

The basic facts of Tecumseh's life can be easily summarized. His parents came from the South to settle in the Ohio country in the middle of the eighteenth century. Sugden gives them a precise ethnographic identity. Tecumseh's father was a Kispoko, one of the five divisions among the Shawnees, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Appalachian Book of the Dead II

Late Saturday afternoon in Charlottesville.
Columbus Day,
Windless, remorseless Columbus Day,
Sunlight like Scotch tape
Stuck to the surfaces of west-worn magnolia leaves.
Children are playing their silly games
Behind the back yard,
toneless, bellless Columbus Day.

Despair's a sweet meat I'd hang a fang in once or twice,
Given the go-ahead.
And where's October's golden and red,
Where is its puff of white smoke?
Another page torn off
the Appalachian Book of the Dead,
Indifferent silence of heaven,
Indifferent silence of the world.

Jerusalem, I say quietly, Jerusalem,
The altar of evening starting to spread its black cloth
In the eastern apse of things—
the soul that desires to return *home*, desires its own destruction,
We know, which never stopped anyone,
The fear of it and dread of it on every inch of the earth,
Though light's still lovely in the west,
billowing, purple and scarlet-white.

CHARLES WRIGHT

his mother was a woman from the Pekowi division. The Shawnees were patrilineal, and so Tecumseh, "almost certainly born on the Scioto, at either Chillicothe or Kispoko Town," inherited both his father's Kispoko affiliation and his membership in the panther clan.

His childhood and young adulthood became a litany of loss at the hands of the invading Americans. They killed Tecumseh's father at the battle of Point Pleasant and his oldest brother at Buchanan's Station. They destroyed the towns in which he lived in Ohio and Indiana. They not only killed Shawnees who fought against them, but also friendly Shawnee leaders such as Cornstalk and Moluntha. They forced large numbers of Shawnees to seek refuge beyond the Mississippi. Tecumseh had good reason to hate Americans; and by Sugden's account, he did.

Tecumseh was born sometime between 1768 and 1771 (the date is uncertain) into an age of Indian resistance to Anglo-American invasion. When the French alliance crumbled, first the Ottawa war chief Pontiac in 1763, then Joseph Brant of the Iroquois, Little Turtle of the Miamis, Blue Jacket of the Shawnees, Tarhe of the Wyandots, and others struggled to created a series of Indian alliances north of the Ohio to halt the American advance. After the Revolution, these alliances enjoyed a weak and undependable British sponsorship, but they were militarily formidable. They crushed American forces sent against them, just as they had earlier defeated British forces, and they devastated and depopulated the frontiers.

In a long war, however, they were no match for Anglo-American armies. They lacked the artillery necessary to take fortified places, and they lacked the supply network necessary to keep armies in the field. Indians won victories and went home. They were warriors, not soldiers. Only European allies could provide the artillery and the supplies that they needed for long-term victory. And the leaders of the various confederations generally recognized this. They grasped that they had to be diplomats as well as warriors.

The idea of regional Indian confederations, as Sugden writes, was old when Tecumseh was young. Tecumseh thus only partially fits his enemy William Henry Harrison's description of him as "one of those uncommon geniuses which spring up occasionally to produce revolutions and overturn the established order of things." He was revolutionary enough, but he was not the first to imagine that a united Indian front could stay the Americans. He was not the first to attempt to unite Indian peoples against invading Europeans in what became the Old Northwest. He was not the first to claim land on behalf of all Indians and to deny the right of civil chiefs in particular tribes to cede it. He was not the first to try to mobilize supernatural forces to the task of uniting the Indians and resisting the Anglo-Americans. Tecumseh inherited ambitions and models. Sugden is very clear about this, but although he is more than willing to acknowledge Tecumseh's predecessors, he compensates by denigrating other leaders of Tecumseh's own alliance. Thus the Potawatomie war leader Main Poc, who was critical to mobilizing the western Indians, "was a boorish, bloodthirsty, drunken savage." Main Poc fulfills the role that Tenskwatawa played in earlier versions of the Tecumseh story. He is the bad Indian who makes Tecumseh all the more noble. This technique of invidious comparison restores a more narrowed uniqueness to Tecumseh. Even as Sugden acknowledges Tecumseh's faults—he failed to control his temper, he was sometimes impetuous and stubborn—he gives his companions far greater faults, and thus makes Tecumseh appear more admirable and unusual in comparison.

For most of his early life, Tecumseh remained in the shadows of great events. He is hard for a biographer to spot. He was a warrior and then a minor war leader in the great wars that the Indian confederations north of the Ohio waged against the Americans following the Revolution. Tecumseh ambushed boats along the Ohio; he certainly fought in Tennessee. He was not present, however, when the Indians attained their two great victories over American armies under General Josiah Harmar and Governor Arthur St. Clair. He was present at Fallen Timbers, the small battle that became a great American victory when the British shut the gates of Fort Miami on the retreating Indians and brought home to them that they could not depend on British support.

In the early nineteenth century, Tecumseh remained in the shadow of his brother Lalawéthika, who took the name Tenskwatawa, which meant Open Door, and became known to the Americans as the Shawnee Prophet. Like Tecumseh, the Prophet created new variations on old Indian themes. His great visions and his syncretic teachings combined Christian and Shawnee elements in a way reminiscent of the Delaware Prophet and others in the region. Even as he assimilated elements of Christianity into his preaching, Tenskwatawa also called for a rejection of white ways and a sharper segregation of races in a place where mixing had been the norm.

Tenskwatawa's teachings and Tecumseh's leadership took hold less among

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

their own people, or among the neighboring peoples who had fought for earlier confederations, than among the Indian nations to the north and west in Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, and beyond the Mississippi. The Prophet and Tecumseh did not create this resistance to the Americans, but they certainly fed it. Before the Potawatomies, the Winnebagoes, and others had heard of either the Prophet or Tecumseh, they feared, resented, and prepared to resist the coming of the Americans. Western warriors and their families flocked to the inter-tribal town that Tenskwatawa established at Greenville, Ohio in 1806 and then to its successor, Prophetstown, at Tippecanoe, Indiana in 1808. Most Shawnees, on the other hand, never followed Tecumseh or the Prophet.

It is only after the establishment of the town at Greenville that Tecumseh emerges clearly in the records. He is a figure who depends on the light that is cast upon him by his white enemies and allies; he is most distinct in his diplomatic and military confrontations with the Americans and in his dealings with the British. Sugden begins his book with a conference in 1807 between Tecumseh and Thomas Kirker, the governor of Indiana, before doubling back to treat his early life. It is a necessary device, since it was at this moment, with less than a decade to live, that Tecumseh stepped out of the shadows of others. He eloquently, if unsuccessfully, opposed Governor William Henry Harrison's demands for land cessions and his often fraudulent treaties, and began his peripatetic travels throughout both the Old Northwest and the Old Southwest to cement an Indian alliance against the Americans. His message was straightforward: the land was the common property of all Indians and they must unite behind the Prophet. The Great Spirit would bless them, and they would prevail.

In all of this Tecumseh was remarkably resilient, energetic, and ambitious, but the results of his crusade were mixed. His pleas for unity actually created divisions in tribes and villages, as younger warriors challenged and sometimes overthrew more accommodating civil leaders. Except among the Creeks, Tecumseh's mission to the South was largely a failure. In his absence Tenskwatawa responded to an American invasion by William Henry Harrison by testing his spiritual powers against the Americans. He fought instead of withdrawing, as Tecumseh had wished. Thus the fighting began before Tecumseh was ready, and he never fully gained control of his allies in the West, whose sporadic border warfare was precisely what Tecumseh sought to avoid.

Still, he reacted to each setback with renewed efforts. And his weakness drew him toward the British, whom he never trusted. The weakness, indeed, was mutual: he needed their aid against the Americans, and as the War of 1812 approached they needed his warriors to defend the southwestern frontier of Canada. For a brief moment early in the war, Tecumseh's dream of staying the American advance, and securing Indian sovereignty and territory, seemed feasible.

Detroit fell in August, 1812 to combined British and Indian forces. American militia and regulars proved no match for Tecumseh's warriors in open fighting, and the Red Sticks, the Creek war faction, rose against the Americans in the South. And then it all crumbled. The Creek War became a bloody civil war, and the weakness and the incompetence of the British forced them and their allies to retreat. Tecumseh died in retreat in 1813. His enemies mutilated his corpse and then resurrected him as the tragic, heroic Indian.

This basic narrative, again, is well known. Sugden refines it by restoring lost details, and removing accretions of legend and folklore, and explaining why he accepts some stories and rejects others. Whole sections of Tecumseh's life become clearer. Sugden establishes where Tecumseh was at a given time, whom he married or lived with, who his allies were.

All of this historiographical effort is impressive. Yet the larger interpretations that Sugden advances are troubling. His verbs point to the problem. A biographer requires the occasional "must have been" or "might have been," but this biography descends into the treacherous world of "could have," "must have," "would have," and "might have" immediately, with Sugden's reconstruction of the conference between Governor Kirker of Indiana and Tecumseh. And the conditional and the subjunctive remain Sugden's constant companions until Tecumseh's death nearly 400 pages later.

Since there are few reliable records about Tecumseh, Sugden is forced into surmise. The surmise is often engaging, and it is almost always reasoned and educated; but the reader is forced to rely on Sugden as Tecumseh's surrogate, to presume that he somehow knows how Tecumseh felt or thought when Tecumseh himself does not tell us what he felt or thought. Such an intense identification with a vanished world and a vanished person is not impossible, but there are two reasons to be suspicious of this reconstruction. The first is Sugden's wooden ethnographical construction of the Shawnees. It relies on an old-fashioned anthropology in which cultures—each separate and distinct—produce humans who are the equivalent of figures in children's play sets, each frozen into a single, distinctive role: the warrior, the chief, the prophet, the mother. To be a Shawnee is to share a fixed set of reactions, feelings, and rules. This is culture divorced from action, from lives in which old ways of acting and thinking are constantly at risk in the world, constantly being modified and changed.

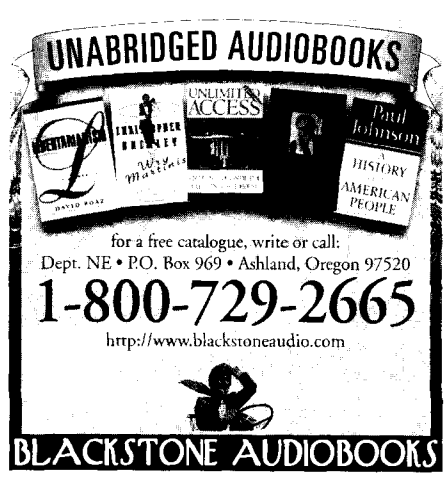
In reality, however, the Shawnees were as varied and complicated and unpredictable a people as the Americans. Good history should disrupt this static

NEW AUTHORS
PUBLISH YOUR WORK
All subjects considered:
Fiction, Biography, Poetry, Religion, Childrens;
AUTHORS WORLDWIDE INVITED.
Write or send your manuscript to:
MINERVA PRESS
2 Old Brompton Road • London SW7 3DQ, England

FREE CASH GRANTS!
College. Scholarships. Business.
Medical bills. Never Repay.
Toll Free: 1-800-218-9000 Ext. G-4377

SEIZED CARS FROM $175.
Porsches, Cadillacs, Chevys,
BMW's, Corvettes. Also Jeeps, 4WD's.
Your Area. Call Toll Free,
1-800-218-9000, Ext. A-4377
for current listings.

GOVERNMENT FORECLOSED HOMES FROM
pennies on $1. Delinquent Tax,
Repo's, REO's. Your Area.
Call Toll Free: 1-800-218-9000
Ext. H-4377 for current listings



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

portrayal of "culture," but Sugden often succumbs to a reified ethnography that has been under heavy historical and anthropological attack. This, despite the evidence of his own historical narrative, which shows that the Shawnees were deeply divided over what it meant to be Shawnee in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; and Tecumseh's own shifting version of being Shawnee was in the clear minority.

Sugden is too honest a historian to deny this conflict, but he explains it by casting Tecumseh and his allies as traditionalists and those who refused to join him as assimilationists. Such simple divisions are deeply misleading, and they obscure the more complicated and mixed world that produced Tecumseh and his brother. Sugden portrays the late eighteenth-century Shawnees as a people among whom "the old ways were in retreat." The Prophet was an advocate of Indians living "as did the Indians in olden days." Tecumseh follows his "backward looking" brother in this. He changes his dresses to deerskin, and reminds older Indians of a "past they had thought they had lost forever."

There is no denying the Prophet's nativism, but it was not "backward looking." It was very much a product of the times. It was nearly a mirror image of events taking place among white Americans. Tenskwatawa and Tecumseh, like many Americans on the other side, were trying to re-arrange what had been a diverse and tangled world into a world of clearer racial divisions. Indian nativism was clearly a response to the romantic racialism that was overwhelming Enlightenment attitudes in the new United States, a fact that underscores how linked to each other these two societies were even as they attempted to distance themselves from each other. In the end, the need for British aid made the Prophet's doctrines more anti-American than anti-white.

Sugden also tries to make the religious revivals that swept through Indian communities during this period a largely native response, but Gregory Dowd has argued that they were linked to similar revivals that were sweeping white communities, that there was occurring a common Great Awakening that moved easily across the blurred line separating these communities. What Sugden describes as the "bizarre ritual" of the religious revival among the Creeks sounds very similar to the "jerks" that afflicted repentant sinners at Christian revivals.

Indeed, as Sugden has to acknowledge repeatedly, neither Tenskwatawa's religion nor his social and political doctrines were all that traditional. He incorporated Christian symbols into his religion, and he attacked older religious practices in demanding that his followers throw away their medicine bags. The two brothers became enemies of most of the established leadership of the Shawnees, and of the civil chiefs among other peoples—not only because they denounced land sales, but also because they claimed the direct allegiance of their warriors, thus subverting the long-established leadership structure.

Culturally, socially, and politically, the brothers were revolutionaries. Shawnee and other Indian societies were changing. All concerned recognized that Shawnees would be different from what they had been in the past. The quarrel was over the nature of the change, and how it would take place. To portray this quarrel as a debate over tradition and assimilation is to disguise its most important aspects. It is also implicitly to deny Indians the right to be a modern, historical people. For these are encoded terms: in this context, "traditionalism" means Indianness and "assimilation" means the loss of Indianness. If Tecumseh stood for "Indianness" and tradition, then it would appear that real Indians east of the Mississippi died with the heroic Tecumseh.

Tecumseh and the Prophet were about more than "tradition" also in the details. And for someone so precise about details, Sugden is sometimes cavalier in his assessment of their significance. Thus he takes more or less seriously Tenskwatawa's and Tecumseh's attempt to reconstruct an aboriginal economy, acknowledging only some unavoidable "practical" lapses; but in truth the attempt to restore a self-sufficient native economy purged of contributions from European agriculture and manufacture was a chimera. It was never seriously pursued. Tenskwatawa was not about to renounce either horses or guns. Nor, apparently, was his ban on other domestic animals enforced. The village that the brothers erected at Greenville had carefully fenced fields, a fact that Sugden mentions but does not explain. Indians and whites usually fenced fields for one reason: to keep domestic livestock out. When the Prophet and Tecumseh moved to the Wabash and established their new town at Tippecanoe, they negotiated with the Americans for a blacksmith to mend tools and guns, and for a resident trader.

All of this, according to Sugden, was just Tecumseh being "practical." The culture that the Prophet and Tecumseh espoused, he maintains, was "basically traditional." But surely it is more useful to see the way of life that Tecumseh's and Tenskwatawa's people pursued as a variation on the common backcountry mix of hunting, stock raising, and agriculture that was the common dispensation of Indians and whites. White-Indian conflict was pervasive not so much because the people were different, but because they had grown so much alike.

Both peoples competed for the same resources. Indians who had lived easily with French settlements of traders and small farmers found it harder to live with American settlements of farmers, stockgrowers, and hunters. The diets, the dress, and the beliefs of Indians and backcountry settlers all overlapped. The Wyandots of Brownstown near Detroit became Tecumseh's allies during the War of 1812; Brownstown was the seat of the old confederacies, and its inhabitants were largely Catholic and a people with extensive cornfields, herds of cattle, and apple and peach orchards.

Similarly, Sugden makes much of Tecumseh's reversion to tanned deerskin for his clothing. It was indeed derived from older Indian styles, but his dress was neither distinctively Indian nor cut off from white influences. He continued to incorporate items of white manufacture into his wardrobe. He continued to deal with traders. And deerskin clothing was hardly confined to Indians.. The Kentuckians who killed Tecumseh were "armed with long rifles, tomahawks and knives [and] garbed in leather hunting smocks." They were, in effect, dressed and armed much like Tecumseh.

What is really striking is how intimate this warfare was, how well the combatants often knew each other. Stephen Ruddell, captured and raised by Indians, fought alongside his adopted people until 1795 and then, converted by the Baptists, became a missionary to them. Richard Sparks, or Shawtunte, was raised by the Shawnees and later fought them. When Simon Kenton, who lived with and more often fought against the Indians, attacked Tecumseh's hunting camp in 1793, he had with him James Ward, who was the younger brother of John Ward, a white Shawnee, who died in the fighting. In Tecumseh's final battle, 260 Shawnees, Delawares, Wyandots, and Senecas fought with the Americans.

Sugden's ethnography, and his simple binary division between traditionalists and assimilationists, distorts the context of Tecumseh's world, and it leads Sugden to an oddly ahistorical assessment of the significance of Tecumseh's resistance to American expansionism. Sugden presents the Indian resistance as doomed. By 1793, he writes, "armed resistance to the United States was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

already too late." The "new republic was too powerful, and the oncoming tide of American settlement would engulf them." This is the conventional wisdom of hindsight, but it deserves some examination. Such a conclusion actually cuts against much of the logic of Sugden's own narrative, which demonstrates how narrowly the American victories were won, how militarily unsuccessful Americans were in the War of 1812. It is not at all inconceivable that, with a little luck and better British leadership, the British and their Indian allies might have turned defeats into victories.

And if they had, why is it inconceivable that the boundaries of the present United States might be different? Sugden's fatalism is ahistorical. It assumes the inevitability of borders that are in fact quite contingent. America's boundaries were neither natural nor inevitable. The present frontier could have extended farther north: Americans in the nineteenth century were sure that all of Canada would eventually be American. And it could also have also extended farther south. Is it that hard to imagine a resolution to the War of 1812 that would have left Michigan or the northerly parts of Wisconsin and Minnesota as Canadian rather than American?

It is very unlikely that the Indians allied with Tecumseh could have recovered what they lost, but it is hardly impossible that the British would have been in the position to alter the boundaries of regions as yet largely unsettled by whites. That these regions would come under the sway of American settlers was no more inevitable than that Ontario or Manitoba would be American. The odds might always have been against an Indian buffer state along the Great Lakes—and such a state might not have survived—but the dream was not "doomed." It was defeated by events, not by destiny.

Sugden is a fine historian, but he is caught in the orbit of an icon. Many of his sources are the reminiscences and the hagiographies that created the mythical Tecumseh: the brave, noble, and merciful warrior. His goal is to transcend them, but instead they shape his narrative. By casting Tecumseh as the doomed representative of a traditional society, Sugden recapitulates the legendary Tecumseh. Sugden leaves Tecumseh where he found him: the noble leader of a lost cause. And this is too bad, because Tecumseh was the representative of a more interesting world than the one inhabited by doomed heroes who fight valiantly for lost causes.

RICHARD WHITE is a professor of history at the University of Washington.

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 5*

imprimatur, of the offensive Israel-Nazi analogies so hurtful to the memory of six million and to Israel's reputation.

MORTON A. KLEIN
President
Zionist Organization of America
New York, New York

Toon town politics

To the editors:

While I appreciated Jonathan Chait's demythification of John Kasich and particularly enjoyed the reference to my favorite episode of the underappreciated and deeply subversive TV program "The Simpsons," I must point out that Mayor Quimby did *not* win reelection using a Kasich-like slogan ("Honest John," July 13). In fact, he was defeated 100 percent to one percent, not including the one percent margin of error. He lost to Sideshow Bob Terwilliger, the convicted attempted murderer paroled by Quimby after a campaign for his release was waged by Limbaughesque Birch Barlow. Sideshow Bob earned the support of the Springfield GOP, including the satanic owner of the nuclear power plant, a Schwarzenegger-like actor, and a vampire. Investigation by Lisa and Bart Simpson revealed that the election was stolen, that "the dead have risen, and they're voting Republican," in Lisa's words. Through the magic of television, Quimby was later restored to office, but he did not win it at the ballot box.

LESLIE MILES
San Jose, California

Jonathan Chait replies:

I have since had the chance to watch the episode again. Quimby retained the mayorship after Terwilliger's ballot-stuffing was exposed. This suggests that Terwilliger's chicanery altered the outcome of the election; if the illegal votes merely padded Terwilliger's victory margin but did not swing the outcome, as happened to former Congressman Bob Dornan in 1996, then Quimby would not have regained office.

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (letters may also be sent electronically to: submissions@tnr.com). All letters, sent electronically or otherwise, should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space.

More than just a telescope...more than just a microscope...

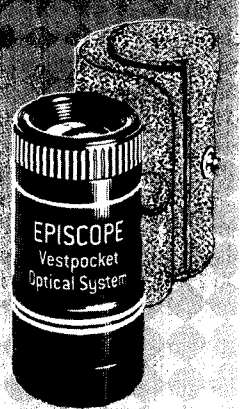
Episcope (the complete vest-pocket optical system)
Still only $59.95*

But read this ad for an even better deal!

Remove the *Episcope* from its fitted leather case and it's a 30-power microscope. A twist of the wrist converts it to a 3x telescope, or a unique 3x telescope-loupe. Another twist, and you have a choice of magnifiers and loupes: 5x, 10x, and 15x powers.

The *Episcope*, only 2" long, was developed in Wetzlar (Germany), the home of world-famous Leica cameras; it's now being made by one of Asia's finest lens makers. The optics are superb: brilliant luminosity, needle-sharp focus, absolute planarity, total chromatic correction, and fully anastigmatic.

The *Episcope* is the first choice of geologists, biologists, physicians, numismatists, philatelists, engineers, and just anybody who likes to see the infinite detail in his/her surroundings. It comes with a plastic "tripod" for extended observations at 15x or 30x magnifications.



• Even at its highest magnification of 30x, the Episcope resolves as distinctly as any laboratory microscope, yet it is only 2" long. An optical miracle!

***And here is the "even better deal": Buy two *Episcope* for $119.90 and we'll send you a third one, with our compliments—absolutely FREE!**

You may order by toll-free phone, by mail, or by fax and pay by check or Visa/MasterCard. Please give order number **#1062E167.** Add $4.95 for ship./ins. and sales tax for CA delivery. You have 30-day refund and one-year warranty. We do not refund postage.

since 1967
haverhills®
2360 Third St., San Francisco, CA 94107

✆ Order by toll-free phone: (800) 797-7367 or by fax: (415) 643-2818 ✆

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WASHINGTON DIARIST

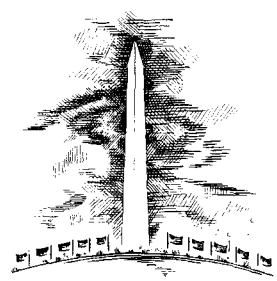
Take it back

SOMETHING WEIRD HAS COME over me lately. A couple of Sundays ago, I found myself driving up to Camden Yards to cheer for the Orioles and eat at Boog's Barbecue. I have developed an inexplicable hankering for crab cakes. I long to dip my toe in the Chesapeake. Yes, I'm afraid it's true. I want to live in the Free State. I want to call Maryland home. Don't misunderstand: I don't plan to leave the District of Columbia, where my wife and I just bought a home. I want Maryland to annex the District, the same way Virginia grabbed Arlington back from Washington, D.C., 152 years ago.

I AM NOT THE ONLY LUNATIC WHO feels this way. There are plenty of far more convincing lunatics—some of them recovering D.C. statehood advocates—who have come to this point of view. Lawrence Mirel, a former general counsel for the District, has put together a "reunion with Maryland" group called Committee for the Capital City that claims among its members a former Virginia attorney general, a former Maryland budget director, and a former White House counsel. Their ally in Congress is Ohio Republican Ralph Regula, who in each Congress gamely introduces a bill for Maryland "retrocession" that goes nowhere. The editors of TNR have also proposed such a plan (See "Abolish D.C.," December 5, 1994), but, amazingly, that didn't do it either.

THE TROUBLE IS THAT MARYLAND doesn't want us. When I called Maryland Governor Parris Glendening's office to beg him to take back D.C., Michelle Byrnie, a spokeswoman for the governor, replied tartly, "We do not want to contribute to your piece. We are very happy with the parameters of our state." Maryland, for some reason, simply doesn't see much benefit in taking in a blighted town and its poverty-stricken inhabitants. "It's the same old District," Byrnie said. That it is. I left D.C. two years ago to live in Massachusetts, and I figured things would be better when I returned this year, what with the control board running most of the city and Mayor Barry getting ready to go. But, to my dismay, things look worse than ever here. When my wife and I went to convert our driver's licenses and re-register our car in D.C., it took us about 12 hours of line-waiting and $1,300. The same process consumed about one hour and $200 in Massachusetts.

I STARTED BY CALLING THE DEPARTment of Motor Vehicles' helpful information line, which, on my first try, most unhelpfully disconnected me without providing any information. Eventually, I found the part of the recording for converting out-of-state licenses, and it told me, "You need to pass a written test.... Study guides are available." My wife picked up the study guides, and we crammed for the exam. But, when we went to take our test, we were told it was no longer required. When asked why the information line gives out false information, the teller at the information booth replied, "I know, it needs updating." As it turns out, it didn't much matter that day: the computers were down, and, after two hours of waiting, we were advised to come back another day.



WHEN IT CAME TIME TO REGISTER the car, our bill came to $1,149 in excise tax—even though we'd already paid the District excise tax on the very same car when we bought it in 1996. "Are you out of your mind?" my wife asked the woman at the DMV. She replied, helpful as ever, that my wife was the one out of her mind. Actually, the DMV woman *was* out of her depth, if not her mind; a few calls to the DMV higher-ups (including, mercifully, a fellow who just came over from the Maryland DMV) determined that the District overcharged us. The check is in the mail, I'm told. But, in a broader sense, the DMV woman was right about our sanity. You'd have to be nuts to buy a home in the District.

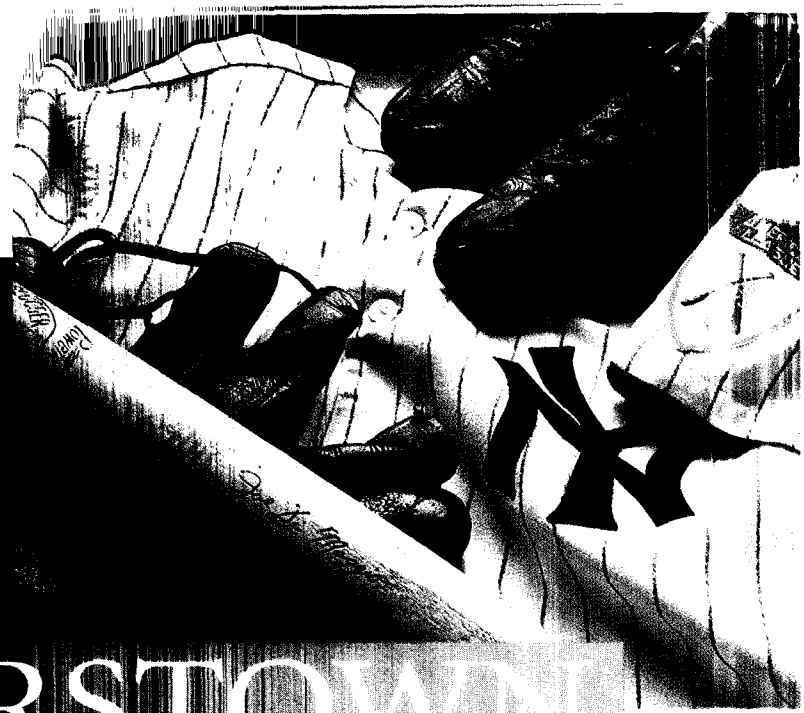
THE DMV IS A METAPHOR FOR D.C. generally. Even with a big budget surplus these days, its fire trucks and ambulances take too long to show, its police can't seem to solve homicides, the traffic lights often don't work, and the potholes have turned its roads into slalom courses. But my favorites are the cabbies, virtually unregulated, who drive ancient wrecks that smell of gasoline and die all over town. Recently I took a ride in a cab whose ceiling fabric had partially fallen down—creating the sensation of travelling in a collapsed tent. This past spring *The Washington Post* reported on an FBI investigation that found inspectors were accepting $150 from taxi drivers to pass cabs that otherwise would flunk. And who's inspecting the cabbies? On another recent ride, the driver insisted on rolling along at ten miles per hour, looking back every few moments and shouting, "Stop talking about me!" He then pulled over a few blocks short of our destination and demanded we get out because, he said, he was afraid to drive near the radio tower up the road.

I ASKED THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE D.C. control board just what has improved in the last couple of years. Parking meters, he replied. Better parking meters. Now *that's* progress. The schools may be crumbling and killers running free, but the parking meters are glistening. I suppose this shouldn't be surprising. The only thing D.C. seems to do with any reliability is revenue collection. The *Post* reported in June that District parking-ticket-writers must issue 90 tickets a day—that's one every four minutes. The new city manager vowed to relax that absurd quota, but I haven't noticed. A couple of weeks ago, my wife got a parking ticket on our street for exceeding the two-hour limit—even though she had been driving the car in another part of town during the hours in question and returned moments before the ticket was issued. I've received another unjust $50 whopper since then. A friend who works at the court says the ticket-writers even fine on-duty police cars, forcing the officers to spend their time in traffic court instead of on the beat.

NO WONDER MARYLAND WANTS nothing to do with us. Even Mirel, the D.C. lawyer pushing "reunion," says the federal government would have to pay Maryland something to take the District. But perhaps a more elaborate sweetener is needed. My suggestion is to throw in Delaware if Maryland takes D.C. Delaware, as my colleague Jonathan Chait pointed out in this space a few weeks back (See "The Case Against Myself," August 3), is a rather annoying strip known mostly for clogging up traffic with toll booths on the small stretch of I-95 that passes through the state. An empire-minded Maryland would acquire plenty of beachfront property with Delaware. If Maryland still refuses, Mirel has a Plan B. "West Virginia would make some sense," he says. "Robert Byrd always wanted the federal government in his state. He can have it." Picture it: The national emblem of rural poverty acquires America's worst case of urban decay. Oh, Maryland, please, take us out of pity.

DANA MILBANK

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



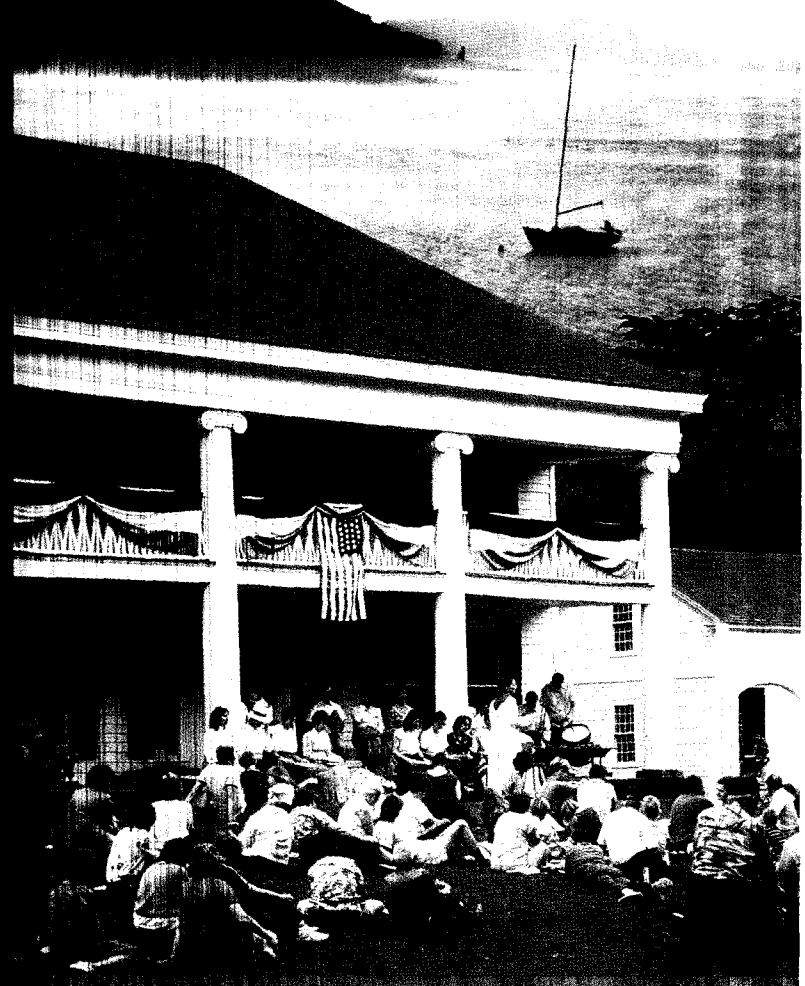
America's
village
is waiting
for you!

COOPERSTOWN

NEW YORK

Cooperstown is America's village

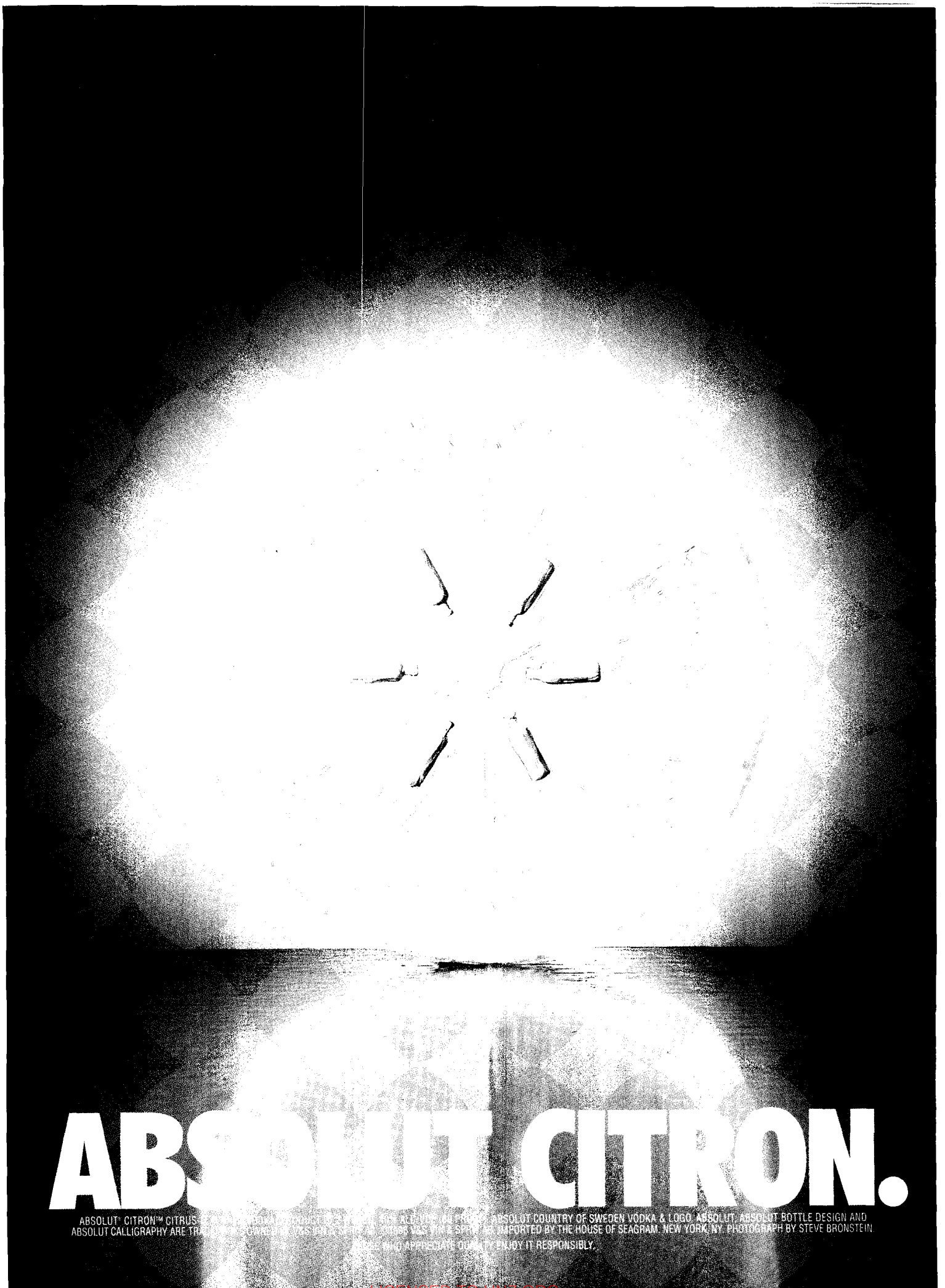
...the only place where you can enjoy the best in sports, culture, history, and spectacular natural beauty. Here's just some of what's waiting for you!



- The National Baseball Hall of Fame, the world's most famous sports museum.
- Fenimore House Museum, featuring the legendary Thaw Collection of American Indian Art.
- The Farmers' Museum, an open-air journey back in time, complete with rare animal breeds.
- The Otesaga Resort Hotel – a four-star experience, and home to the incomparable Leatherstocking Golf Course.
- Glimmerglass Opera, the critically-acclaimed, world class performance center.

Call Toll-Free 1-888-875-2969 x210 for a Cooperstown Getaway brochure,
or visit us on the world wide web at **www.discovercooperstown.net**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



ABSOLUT® CITRON™ CITRUS [illegible] ARE TRADEMARKS OWNED BY V&S VIN & SPRIT AB. IMPORTED BY THE HOUSE OF SEAGRAM, NEW YORK, NY. PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE BRONSTEIN.
PEOPLE WHO APPRECIATE QUALITY ENJOY IT RESPONSIBLY.

LICENSED TO UNC.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED